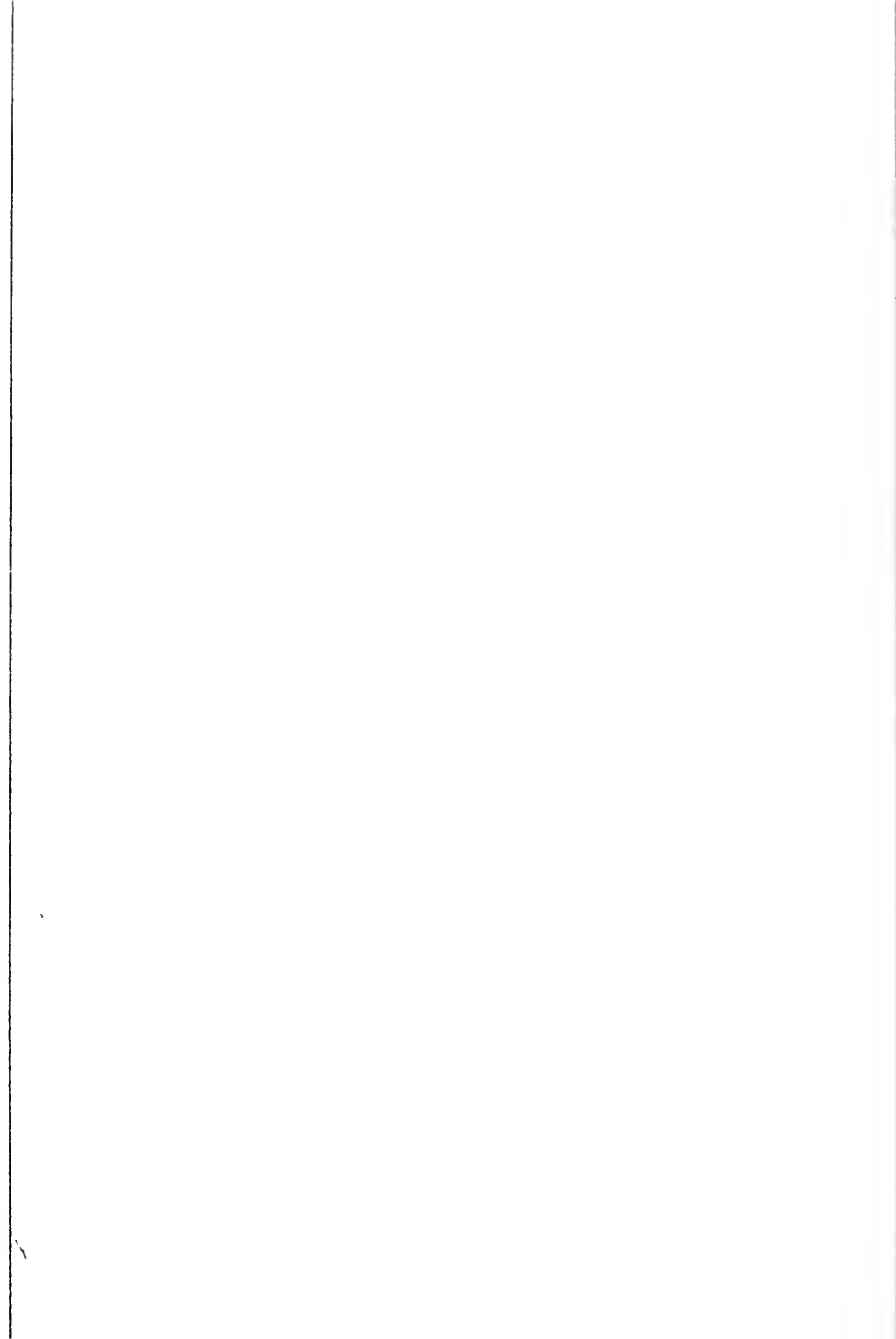


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Special page 76
CHRISTIAN UNION.

REPORT OF SPEECHES

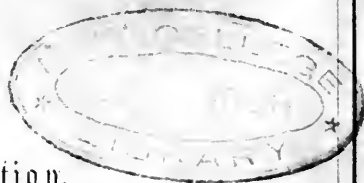
DELIVERED IN

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD,
FRIDAY, 15TH MAY 1863,

AND IN

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH,
THURSDAY, 28TH MAY 1863.

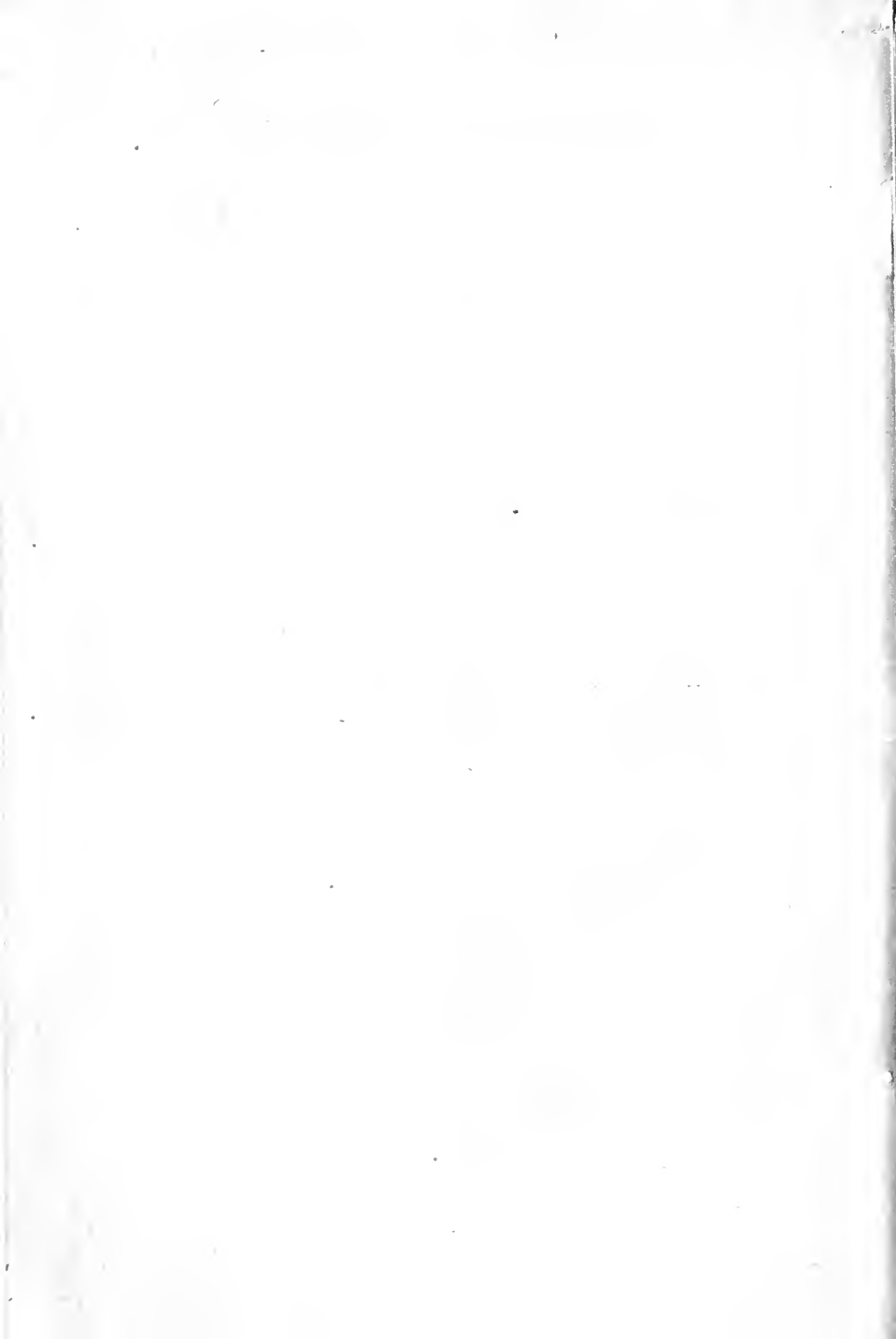
Revised Edition.



EDINBURGH:

ANDREW ELLIOT, 15 PRINCE'S STREET.

1863.



CHRISTIAN UNION.

REPORT OF SPEECHES

ON

UNION WITH THE FREE CHURCH

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THE following Report has been reprinted in a revised and extended form, as it is thought worthy of a more permanent record than the pages of a newspaper will allow. The Publisher is indebted to the Editor of the *Caledonian Mercury* for the use he has been allowed to make of the ample Report which appeared in the columns of that paper.

COMMITTEE ON UNION.

Rev. James Young, *Moderator.*

Rev. Professor Eadie.

„ „ Lindsay.

„ „ Harper.

„ „ M'Michael.

„ Dr. King.

„ „ Cairns.

„ „ Robson.

„ „ Thomson.

„ „ George Johnston.

„ „ William Johnston.

„ „ Smith.

„ „ James Taylor.

„ „ Joseph Brown.

„ „ Frew.

„ Alex. M'Leod, Glasgow.

„ Alex. M'Ewen, do.

„ Henry Calderwood, do.

„ David Thomas.

Rev. William Marshall.

„ Alex. Leitch.

„ William Beckett.

„ William Barr.

„ George Brooks.

„ R. S. Scott.

Mr. James Peddie, Elder.

„ James Mitchell, do.

„ James Marshall, do.

„ Thos. T. Dunn, do.

„ Peter Hamilton, do.

„ James Paton, do.

„ Samuel Stitt, do.

„ J. B. Kidston, do.

„ David M'Cowan, do.

„ Andrew Fyfe, do.

„ James Young, do.

„ William Brown, do.

Rev. Dr. Harper, *Convener.*

12602



CHRISTIAN UNION.

THE following Overtures on this subject were read by the CLERK (Rev. Mr. BECKET) :—

I. FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF BERWICK.

“That whereas there is such a measure of agreement in doctrine, discipline, worship, and government between the United Presbyterian Church on the one hand, and the Free Church of Scotland, the English Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Original Secession Church on the other, as to warrant preliminary steps towards an incorporated union of these bodies : It is humbly overtured that the Synod take the matter into prayerful consideration, with a view to accomplish a result so conducive to the interest of the Church of Christ.”

II. FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF LANCASHIRE.

“That the existence of the various dis-established sections of the Presbyterian Church in Great Britain in a state of separation from each other, while the points of difference between them are confined to matters of minor importance which ought to be matters of forbearance among all Christians, is not only prejudicial to the progress of truth in the land, and calculated to provoke envy and jealousy between those who ought to be found labouring together in every good work ; but is also apparently dishonouring to the Church's Head : And

“That the Presbytery of Lancashire has already been taking steps towards union with the English Presbyterian Church : It is therefore humbly overtured that the Synod take such measures as shall seem best calculated to bring together the different dis-established Churches in Scotland and England viz., the United Presbyterian, Free, Original Secession, Reformed Presbyterian, and English Presbyterian Churches into one Free British Church.”

III. FROM THE CONGREGATION OF BROUGHTON PLACE, EDINBURGH.

“That it is the duty of the different sections of the Church of Christ not only to manifest reciprocal feelings of confidence and affection, but also, where no material diversities subsist in reference to doctrine and polity, and where otherwise practicable, to endeavour to effect a union with each other : That whereas there is no essential difference between the United Presbyterian and Free Churches in regard to doctrine, discipline, worship, and government, and both Churches recognise the paramount supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ as being the governor among the nations, as well as the Supreme Head of His Church, and maintain with equal steadfastness and sincerity the great principle of spiritual independence : And whereas the spirituality, purity, and extension of the Church of Christ at home and abroad would be greatly promoted by the union of two Churches placed in such circumstances : It is therefore humbly overtured that the Synod take this matter into prayerful consideration, and appoint a committee to meet with any committee of the Free Church (should the Free Church Assembly see fit to appoint such a committee) with the view of considering the whole subject.”

IV. FROM REV. DR. GEORGE JOHNSTON.

"That whereas it is the duty of the different sections of the visible Church not only to cultivate a spirit of fraternal affection and walk together in love, but also to endeavour after that visible unity for which the Redeemer prayed, and which is conducive to the welfare of the Church and to its efficiency in the conversion of the world to the faith of the gospel: That whereas the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland are to a great extent agreed in doctrine, worship, and government, and the points in which they differ are confessedly of such minor importance as may be easily adjusted or made matters of forbearance, there seems to be no insurmountable obstacles in the way of an incorporated union of these two Churches: Therefore it is humbly overtured that the Synod take this matter into prayerful consideration, and adopt such measures as they in their wisdom shall judge best fitted to secure such an important object."

The Rev. Mr. KERR, Dunse, addressed the Synod, as one of the representatives of the Berwick Presbytery, in support of their overture. He said—Moderator, I have been called upon very suddenly and without preparation to address you, having expected a brother to take this place who has been obliged to leave the Court. However, I consider it no small honour to have the privilege of rising up in this Court and being the first to propose a union between the United Presbyterian Church and the other non-established Presbyterian churches of Scotland—(applause). I think, at this stage of the question, it is not necessary, nor will it be expedient, that we should say much. All that is needful is, that the measure should be simply introduced to this meeting, and probably the less that is said about it in entering into details at the present stage the better—(hear, hear). I consider it most appropriate that such a proposal as that contained in this overture should emanate from our united Church, on whose banner, and in whose basis, the duty of union among Christians is held up so prominently before the view of the whole Church of Christ. The union now proposed for your consideration is one, sir, that of all others is most desirable and necessary, inasmuch as the parties concerned stand so nearly related to each other, are so similar in character, and are engaged in the same great cause. Indeed, there is nothing at the present time, in the ecclesiastical world, to be compared in interest with the movement now originated, whether considered in itself, or in respect to the immense importance it would add to the position we occupy as an unestablished Church, and the influence we would thereby be fitted to exercise both on our country at home and on the world abroad. The Disruption of the Free Church from the Church of Scotland, was one of the most remarkable events that ever happened, as such, in Scotland. We know that the influence of it has been exceedingly great throughout other nations, especially on the Continent of Europe; for while we, from our small beginnings, have gone on regularly, but gradually, insensibly increasing, so that our name and position was not felt far out of Scotland, the noble outcoming of so many ministers from the Established Church of Scotland, leaving everything behind them, led their name and worth to be noted and admired wherever Christian principle and consistency were esteemed—(applause). I hold that the next great event that shall be equal to it, if not greater, will be the joining together of two bodies, now proposed to be united, so important in themselves, and so large, into one great unestablished Church, in the face of all the world—(applause). This union is a union that is not only possible and desirable, but one it is our duty to seek to obtain. The command of our Saviour in the Scriptures, the principles of the Gospel itself, the character of our Christian work, all lead us to seek to be united to other bodies that are placed in the same circumstances with ourselves, and between us and whom there is so little difference. The Free Church hold the same great ecclesiastical principles that we do.

The Free Church hold the same great leading doctrines of the Word of God as we do, and preach the Gospel with the same purity. There are differences between us; and we should not shut our eyes to these differences, which it will be the object of these motions, year after year, to smooth away. There is nothing, however, that will be found impossible if there is only a willing mind; and I am sure that if this Church and the Free Church feel the necessity and duty of it first of all, the matter itself is not, as one of the overtures says, insurmountable. All of us remember that the years of feud and strife between us and the Established Church were between us and those that are now out of its pale, but who were then within it. Those that were left behind never contended with us—they had no controversy on the subject—they were moderate in that, as well as in other and more important—(laughter). It was those that went out of the Established Church that were our controversial opponents; but yet we often said, in those days which many of us remember with deep interest, and we still say, that we had no antipathy, no personal hostility to the men that occupied the pulpits of the State Church. Our hostility was entirely to the system of an Establishment. It is possible that they might think so; they may not even yet believe that our hostility was not personal; but I know well that in all the public meetings we held this was again and again insisted on, that we had no hostility whatever to the ministers and members of the Established Church; and we oftentimes, in order to show this, admitted that if we ourselves were under the influence of the Establishment opiate, it might have the same effect on us. We now, however, occupy the same ground, and seek a union with men with whom we never had any personal difference whatever, and now that they are entirely free from the system against which we waged our war, we have no further warfare with them—(applause). There is just one additional remark I wish to make. The overtureists do not wish to press this matter, or urge it with undue haste. We are perfectly aware of the difficulties that must be overcome in order to secure a union that shall be productive of the fruits that our last union brought forth. We therefore simply this day lay the overture on your table, and without saying what means or measures you should adopt, or at what time you should bring this matter to a conclusion, we would simply ask you to use such means as may be thought by you in your wisdom most conducive to that end. Our last union, from the time when it was proposed and the day when we united, took about ten years for its consummation. I do not expect that it will require such a length of time before the union at present contemplated shall be consummated; and even though it should, it would be better to wait all the time than that the union should be brought together in a hasty, injudicious, and improper manner—(applause). With these remarks I give way to my friend and brother, Dr. Cairns—(applause).

The Rev. Dr. CAIRNS, who was received with loud applause, then said—Having already expressed my sentiments on this important question in a speech which has been pretty widely circulated, I shall say little at present in support of the overture from our Presbytery. It contemplates union with all other unendowed Presbyterians in England and Scotland, and thus goes a little further than some other proposals which confine the bodies with which we open terms to Scotland. This was the judgment of the Presbytery, and I so far agree with it, as to desire the presence of the English Presbyterians in any negotiations that may be held between us and the Free Church, or any other body. My own mind is not finally decided, as to whether it will be wise to include the English Presbyterians in one great confederation with churches in Scotland, or to separate them and the English section of our own Church into one English branch of unendowed Presbyterianism, to be governed by its own Synod or Assembly. If the brethren in England of both Churches generally desire it, I should prefer continued union, though from what I understand to be

the general feeling in the English Presbyterian Church, there is rather a wish to maintain an English nationality, and to stand forth before the English people as an indigenous institution. However this may prove, I think that the English Presbyterians have the clearest right to be represented in any committee that may ever come to be appointed on the question of incorporating union, not only because it may turn out that they are quite as willing to unite with us as any of the sister Churches, but because the close relations which have always subsisted between them and the Free Church, would make it unfair to decide our own future relation to the Free Church in their absence. I do hope that whatever motion may be made for negotiations or intercommunications will include this sister Church in England; and that there will be a virtual union arrived at of all unendowed Presbyterians in Great Britain, even if, for the sake of convenience, there afterwards arises a new distribution of forces. Into this ulterior question, so grave, and in some respects so new and untried, I think it better not to enter until it can be ascertained whether union in any shape is really practicable. I have, Moderator, as I have said elsewhere, strong convictions and also strong hopes on this head, and I shall only further glance at some of the difficulties. There are two kinds of difficulties in the way—accidental and essential—the one class arising out of causes that do not at all make a necessary and constant obstacle, and the other class arising out of causes which do. To the first head of accidental difficulties, I refer the short time the subject has been seriously under discussion, the want of cordiality in some quarters between the representatives of different Churches, the occasional quarrels and misunderstandings that may have arisen or may still subsist, the strong love of things as they are, just because they are, and have been found to work well. These, I say, are mere accidents, and I do hope that no one will rest much upon them, because they may change any day, and, without the slightest change in anything else, make the very parties that may now hesitate eager for incorporation. I hope nobody will be offended if I refer to this same class of accidental difficulties, supposed differences in regard to Christian doctrine. These, I humbly think, are mere accidental misunderstandings, and will, I trust, give place before fuller and more careful inquiry. I am not aware of anybody in the United Presbyterian Synod that objects to the doctrines of the Free Church or of any other Church named in this overture. We give them full credit for holding sincerely to the Westminster Standards; and though they do not all agree among themselves on points left open by those Standards, we are perfectly satisfied to meet them on the common ground, and to allow them their liberty. In some quarters, however—I do not think numerous, and as I hope and pray, not incurably—there is a disposition to charge us, or at least some of us, with departing from Westminster Calvinism. I am thoroughly persuaded that this is pure misunderstanding—(applause). If these brethren had gone through all the discussions and mutual explanations of the atonement controversy, and especially if they had experienced, as we have done since, the atmosphere of delightful and unbroken doctrinal harmony which has succeeded, they would never dream of any discord being among us, either with one another or with the Westminster Standards; and they would dismiss this obstacle as a mere accident—an accident, I hope, of a transient and temporary influence—which will soon vanish before inquiry, before truth and charity. There are, however, real and not inconsiderable difficulties, which are involved in the very nature of the movement, and which require more than mere kindly feeling and accurate knowledge of facts to overcome. The first and chief of these is the undeniable difference which generally prevails in regard to the power of the civil magistrate. Here, undoubtedly, however our formularies may approach or even coincide (and I am disposed to go further than some in asserting their approximation), we are not, in point of general belief, at one. There are views held in the Churches with which we seek to unite, with which most or probably all of us cannot

agree, as to the right and duty of the magistrate to endow the Church and support religion from State resources. I do not think we differ as to the so-called Headship of Christ over the nations, and as to the duty of civil governors to regulate their legislation by the revealed will of God. It is rather as to the application of these great principles, more especially in relation to the support of the Christian Church, and the means which the magistrate may lawfully employ, and the Church lawfully take advantage of, for that end. I must say for myself that if I thought there was any likelihood of this difference becoming a practical one, I could not recommend union; because I do not see how such a considerable discrepancy as to the working of the Christian Church could be compromised or adjusted—(applause). It is because the differences as to all the Churches in question is purely speculative, and likely to remain so; and also because there are no more admirable expounders and ornaments of the principle of self-support of the Christian Church, on which we have all along relied, that I am fully prepared to bear cordially and honestly with the Establishment principle of these brethren, and to allow them every facility in stating and defending it, if they are prepared equally to bear with me—(loud applause)—and I may add that I believe we shall all be the better for the discussion. For myself, I may say that I am quite prepared to unite substantially upon the Canadian basis, or the Australian (and it is a vitally-important fact that these documents have been ruled by the Free Church at home to be in harmony with its Standards), or upon a declaration signed, in connexion with a movement commenced in 1856, by a name that must ever be mentioned with respect in this Synod—Sir George Sinclair—and which was issued in 1857. This declaration, in its sixth article, I will take the liberty to quote:—"That, in the judgment of both communions, it is a duty incumbent upon all men, and especially upon those in authority (from whom He who has given them much is entitled to expect the more), to recognise the paramount supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, as being the Governor among the nations, and consequently to regulate their conduct, in whatsoever capacity, by his laws; but as those who entirely concur in all other ecclesiastical matters may, and do entertain different views as to the course which the State is bound to pursue in reference to the interests of the Church, and more especially on the question of endowment (some holding that one denomination should be supported at the public cost; others, that different sects should be so simultaneously and proportionally; and others, that the pastors should be maintained by the members of their own communion), this point ought to be left as a question of forbearance, on which ministers and members may be allowed to entertain such a view as they deem most consonant with Scripture, and most conducive to the welfare of the Church—more especially as any formal deliverance on this subject is of no practical consequence in the case of self-supporting communions." It is well known that this scheme had the cordial support of our late revered father Dr. Brown, and that it was sanctioned not only by many influential laymen but by some leading ministers of the Free Church. If the brethren of the Churches concerned are now ready, as I hope and pray they will be found to be, to go into any such arrangement, the chief difficulty is happily surmounted; and the cause of Christian union has attained a greater triumph than ever before in this country, because a more considerable difference has been overcome by the force of Christian love without any sacrifice, as I humbly think on either side, of Christian fidelity to truth and principle—(applause). The only other difficulty of any considerable magnitude is the financial one, which exists in the case of the Free Church. It will certainly require very grave consideration in all quarters, whether the Free Church be asked for the sake of union to modify in accommodation to our views the system of a Sustentation Fund, or we be asked to go farther in developing our Supplementing Fund in accordance to them, or both systems be allowed to work simultaneously in the same

Church. This question, however, I humbly think is not before us at the present stage, as we cannot yet know how this difficulty is regarded by our brethren of the Free Church. Unless we think the obstacle insuperable, which probably none of us will do, and which I conceive none of us are entitled to do, till by conference with brethren we have made an honest effort to surmount it, then I think that however proper a matter this may be for remarks afterwards, it would hardly be suitable, or even graceful towards our brethren, in ignorance of their views on this point, to insist on it on the one hand as a final obstacle, or even to attempt to show, on the other, how it may be removed. I will not detain the Synod much longer. It is not for one who merely supports an overture to indicate how that overture may be best carried into effect. That is rather for members of Synod to suggest and judge of. What the overture asks is the taking of preliminary steps towards union. Such a preliminary step is the discussion in the Synod of the desirableness and practicability of the result intended. Such a preliminary step would be the sending down of the overtures to Presbyteries and sessions, with a view to evoke the mind of the whole Church on the question. Such a preliminary step would be the appointment of a Committee of this Synod to consider the whole subject and report. Such a preliminary step would be the appointment of a Committee to confer with any similar Committee that might be named by any of the Churches included in this overture. I may say for myself that if other brethren and the Synod generally should think this last course at present wise and desirable, I shall cordially support them, and believe that in this they are carrying out the spirit of the overture; and though I cannot speak for brethren of any other Church, and have on this matter sought after consultation with none, being anxious to avoid every appearance of diplomatic arrangement—(applause)—yet I have every reason to believe, from evidence which has come before me without any solicitation, that if this Synod appoint such a Committee as is asked for, I believe, in another overture, it will be met in a corresponding spirit, and we shall then have evidence to guide us on the whole question as to what really are the points of agreement and difference, and the hope of adjustment, such as we are not in possession of at present, and such as I do not think can be obtained otherwise—(applause). If this be regarded as going too far at present, I shall acquiesce, but only with the distinct understanding that the overtures lie on the table, and that the consideration of them be resumed at next meeting of Synod. Let us remember, Moderator, that this question is not standing still, and cannot stand still. Union is effected in Nova Scotia, in Canada, in Australia, and all these Presbyterian Churches have equally friendly relations to us, and to the Presbyterian Churches at home. We are not required formally to adopt the unions carried out in these parts of the world, but we cannot hinder their reflex influence, or obviate the awkwardness and discomfort of union abroad, and separation at home, so as not to give ground again for the wonder of Dr. Heugh in regard to union in the colonies and in Ireland, while the sister Churches in Scotland were still divided—*quæ congruunt uni tertio non congruunt inter se*; or to verify in another sense the lines of Horace as applicable to our somewhat stern and stoical seclusion, "*Cuncta terrarum subacta, præter atrocem animum Catonis*"—(laughter and applause). May we at length join the chorus; and if union has in the judgment of any failed in anything abroad, let us attempt with the help of experience to make it better at home. We are surrounded by the atmosphere of union. Many of the fathers and brethren around me are the authors of the happy union with the Relief Church, which I rejoice that I was old enough as a minister to join in, and which is one of the most delightful recollections of my life. Do any of us regret it? Do we not all bless God for it? and do not those bless God for it most who are with Himself—Struthers, and French, and Brown, and Heugh, and Balmer, and Young, and many more whom I need not name? Older fathers still, grow-

ing, alas! fewer and fewer among us, recal as their own work the earlier union of the two great branches of the Secession; and in you, sir, I am privileged to see the Moderator who in your own earlier days (may God repeat the mercy, and renew your age like the eagle's!) presided over the Synod of your own Church, that took the first steps towards that union! Our brethren of other Churches have had sterner work. Their history has been marked by disruption. The sorrow, the anguish, the anxiety unutterable, connected with the struggle for great principles—which are as dear to us as to them—but for which we have not suffered like them—have been registered in their experience as the gladness of union in ours. May it not be that for them, too, there is in store this great joy and consolation? May it not be that in the mysterious providence of God, disruption was necessary to union, and that in due time love will supplement and perfect what truth began? I will not breathe one word here that may grate on the ear of any member of the Church of Scotland. I have found how hard it is—extremely hard—to be perfectly fair and candid to men of other Churches; and who can read the life of one who was yesterday referred to so justly in this Synod, Professor Robertson, without admiration of such men, and without the fervent prayer that with men like him, still in such numbers in the Church of Scotland, the progress of light and love may one day permit us outwardly to unite, and thus to gather up all the scattered members of our Presbyterianism into one body? Still with us the Disruption is no calamity, but a great and precious fact in our Scottish ecclesiastical history and in the history of the Christian Church; and how will it add new lustre and brightness to that great and memorable event, if it come at length, in the providence of God, to gather around its grand and rugged outline the softened hues and lights of Christian Union, as descending from some higher heaven, and revealing at once the image and the presage of that world of peace, where truth in all its strictness and rigour, and charity in all its loveliness and tenderness, are blended into one!—(loud applause).

The Rev. Mr. TAYLOR, of Bootle, in supporting the overture from the Presbytery of Lancashire, said—Moderator, the overture from the Presbytery of Lancashire which Mr. Towers and myself have been requested to support, is nearly identical with that emanating from the Presbytery of Berwick; and after the able manner in which it has been already advocated, and in consideration of the fact that many of the most influential of the members of the Synod may wish to indicate their views upon it, it would be unpardonable in me if I were to occupy your time with many observations. Still, that I may be true to that trust which was committed to me by my brethren of the Presbytery, I crave your indulgence for a very little while I bring before you the leading features of the overture which we have laid upon your table. It will be observed that it refers entirely to the different dis-established sections of the Presbyterian Church in Great Britain; that it speaks of their separation from each other as being not only undesirable, but prejudicial; and the ground on which this statement is made is, that “the points of difference between them are confined to subjects of minor importance, which ought to be matters of forbearance among all Christians.” We do not say, be it observed, that the separation of one Church from another is, in itself considered, and apart from the grounds on which that separation was begun and is continued, a wrong thing. Far from it: were we to take this ground, we should have to condemn some of the grandest and most blessed movements which the world has ever seen. We should have to condemn the separation of the Reformed Churches from the Roman Catholic; we should have to condemn the history of our own Church, and the separation of the Secession and Relief Churches from the Church of Scotland; and we should have to condemn the Disruption of 1843, which called the Free Church into existence. We take no such ground. On the contrary, we affirm that, wherever the interests of

vital truth are at stake, it is the duty of each man to follow that truth wherever it may lead him, and to cleave to it at whatsoever sacrifice. Nay, so far from pleading for union being either obtained or retained by a compromise, we are ready to maintain that there are some churches at this very day—and the Church of England is one of them—in which the evangelical portion of their adherents, seeing the impossibility of preserving purity either of doctrine or of discipline, would do honour to themselves, render noble service to their country, and give great glory to God, if they would only come out from among them and be separate. It is not, therefore, against separation in itself considered that we plead, but against separation on insufficient grounds; and we say that it is both undesirable and prejudicial that churches should remain apart which have no good reason to show for not being united. Nay, I will go further still, and say that it seems to me to be improper for churches to remain separate for reasons which, had they happened to be incorporated, would not have warranted their separation. Now such, as it appears in the view of the Presbytery to which I belong, are the reasons which keep us apart from the Churches named in the overture. "The points of difference are confined to subjects which ought to be matters of forbearance among all Christians." The great point of difference—let us face it fairly and frankly at once—is the Voluntary principle on the one hand, opposed to the theory of Church establishment upon the other. Now, there are few members of this Synod who will say that this is not a matter of importance; and for my part I rejoice that it was so clearly stated and so eloquently defended here on Tuesday morning. We all, or nearly all, adhere to the Voluntary principle, and, what is more, we are not prepared to give up that principle, for we believe that it is destined yet to do a great work in the land; but it is not made a term of communion with us, and therefore I presume I am safe in saying that, though of importance, it is yet of minor importance, and a point which ought to be a matter of forbearance among all Christians. But it will be at once retorted here—You may think it a matter of forbearance, but these other Churches may hold no such opinion. What then; have we lost anything by carrying this overture, even should this be the case? By no means. We have merely shown that the guilt of separation in such circumstances does not lie with us, and that when the brethren of these Churches come to the door of this Synod, if they should ever come, no question will be asked concerning that matter. No doubt, it may be said, all this is already apparent from the formulæ of our Church, and the basis on which we became a united Church; but then there are occasions on which it is proper that these principles should be made specially prominent, and the present seems to be one of these. The minds of men, at least in two or three of the Churches named in the overture, have been directed to union, and no later than last year, the Moderator of the largest of them publicly, in his official address, recognised the desirability of incorporation. In these circumstances, therefore, we are only responding to his call when, by the adoption of such an overture as this, we affirm that, so far as we are concerned, there are no obstacles in the way. Holding though most of us do the Voluntary principle, we do not insist upon it as a term of communion; and provided our friends of other Churches concede to us the liberty of uttering and acting on that principle, whether on the platform of the Liberation Society or elsewhere, we shall not be aggrieved to see them engaged in the advocacy of the principle of a theoretical establishment. This must be the full understanding; a matter of forbearance does not mean that the forbearance is to be on all one side, but that to both parties the liberty shall be conceded of holding, and expressing, and acting on their views on this subject. There must be no compromise, but on this question each must forbear with the other, otherwise I do not see how union is possible. So much for the basis on which this overture rests. Let us look a little at the reasons alleged in support of it. The separate existence of churches whose principles and

practices are so nearly identical, is said to be calculated to provoke envy and jealousy between those who ought to be found labouring together in every good work ; that is to say, it fosters denominational rivalry, and it might not be difficult to find cases in which this tendency has been developed to its utmost extent. The mention of these, however, would be invidious, and might wound the feelings of those whom we desire to conciliate, and provoke them to recriminate, by reminding us of others in which we were by no means free from blame. It is sufficient thus to allude to them, and pass on to the next assertion, that the separate existence of denominations having so minute points of difference is prejudicial to the progress of truth in the land, and apparently dishonouring to the Church's Head. This is especially true of England, where the divided state of the Presbyterian Church is most perplexing to those who wish to inquire into the matter. We cannot get Englishmen to understand our differences, and they turn away from the discussion of them as they would from the disquisitions of the Schoolmen, thinking that we Scotchmen must be a quarrelsome set to allow such things to keep us apart from each other. Now, as a minister of this Church in England, I feel that our position in this respect is prejudicial to our success. Some feel it so strongly that they are prepared to unite at once with the English Presbyterian Synod, even at the expense of separation from this Synod ; but there are others, of whom I am one, who would not like to be separated from this Church in order to be united with the English Presbyterian Church alone. I believe in that case I should lose more than I gained, but I have no such misgiving regarding such a wide British union as that which the overture proposes. Give us that, and you give us every advantage which union with the English Presbyterians could secure, while we should not have the disadvantage of separation from you. Give us that, and you give us a vantage-ground for operating on England such as we could not otherwise possess. Give us that, and the result would rapidly be the wide extension of Presbyterianism in the south. Everything distinctively English would be carefully attended to in the English Synod, while from the annual Assembly here, as from some great heart, the pulsations of spiritual life would flow to the very extremities of the Church. It may be said, perhaps, that we are not ripe for union yet, and this is very likely to be true ; but then the overture is not that we should unite at once, but that we should take steps having this object in view. We all know, in the case of each of the unions which in the course of its history this Church has seen, there were long years of negotiation and intercourse before they were consummated, and the wisdom of our wisest men, and the patience of our most patient men were needed to crown the negotiations with success, and it cannot be otherwise with this ; nevertheless, the object is one which is worth it all, and the sooner we set about it the better. Nor let it be forgotten, that with efforts in this direction special promises of blessing are connected. The two unions to which I have referred were, in the experience of those who took part in them, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and were the starting-points of new effort and new progress in the Redeemer's kingdom, both at home and abroad. Similar results, only far nobler in magnitude, would follow this one. Let us, therefore, strive for this union, in the spirit of our Saviour's prayer, "That they all may be one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." So shall the Lord "command on us the blessing, even life for evermore ;" and we shall prove ourselves the servants of Him "who gathered the dispersed of Israel into one."

The Rev. JAMES TOWERS, Birkenhead, said—Moderator and Brethren, it was not my privilege to move or second the overture from Lancashire, but being appointed by the Presbytery to support it, I very cheerfully consent. And here I may state, that I differ somewhat from Mr. Taylor in regard to union ; he being desirous chiefly for the more extended amalgamation which

would secure a British Church, while, even if this could not at present be attained, I desire union with the English Presbyterians. Our Presbytery has been adopting measures towards this end, a deputation, consisting of Dr. Crichton, Mr. Cameron, and myself, with elders, having been sent to the other Lancashire Presbytery, where we were most kindly received. In addition to this, the Sessions in Liverpool and neighbourhood have had one tea-meeting for prayer and conference, and others are intended to follow. Indeed in our district, almost all the ministers of the English Presbyterian and United Presbyterian Churches are already ripe for union.

Let me, however, Moderator, caution this Synod against the expectation of uniting the English Presbyterians with the entire United Synod. It is asked, "If they can unite with a portion of this Church located in England, why not with the whole?" The answer is easy. At the Disruption, they deemed it expedient not to incorporate with the Free Church of Scotland, but to assume a distinct name and maintain an independent existence, having England for their field of labour. This they did deliberately, and from the conviction that, by assuming such a position, they were better fitted for work in the South, and would commend themselves and their polity to greater acceptance in renouncing a Scotch connexion. But having declined to be of the Free Church—a more powerful body than ours, and with whom they were one in origin, and everything save the name—it would be most unreasonable in brethren here to request that they become part and parcel of the United Presbyterian denomination. I dare not expect it, and, from what I have heard them state, feel assured that such a union is impracticable.

With that portion, however, of this Church which is planted in England they desire to be united; and even at the cost of being severed, with, of course, *the Synod's sanction*, I am persuaded the result would be gain to all parties. Even their *own* pulpits would be open to brethren in Scotland, as *theirs* are to the Free Church just now. You would still be expected to co-operate with us in the extension of Christ's cause as at present, and such severance would be little more than a disjunction, in which *you direct* that we go to the south, while you keep to the north.

And assuredly, Moderator, if union is needed in Scotland, much more is it demanded of the Presbyterians in England. Scotchmen, with their Presbyterian training and metaphysical tendencies, can discover a distinction between the views of Free Churchmen and United Presbyterians; Englishmen cannot, and so our divisions become a reproach. Hence my desire, that whatever may be done here, we in England, without undue delay, go forward.

But while maintaining these views, I am deeply impressed with the greatness and grandeur of the idea taken up by Dr. Cairns and others, of bringing together all the dis-established Presbyterian bodies in the United Kingdom. A British Church is a nobler thing by far than any English union, and desiring the one, much more would I pray for the other. Nor should much of argument be required in order to show how beautiful and blissful such extensive incorporation might be expected to prove, or how difficult it is to show cause why separation is maintained. I read in one of your newspapers to-day an admonition intended for the Free Church, to *beware*, and see that their Reformation principles are maintained. I do not know what Reformation principles are in danger. Probably the writer is one of those men who hold that every denomination is appointed of God to be the guardian of some grand truth, which all the others are prone to overlook, and they must continue apart to defend that particular principle. Such a notion is as worthy of support in our days, as the old fallacy that debt on our churches is a decided benefit. To my mind, it seems that all the churches, instead of being preserved to maintain peculiarities, are called to maintain the common cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for that great purpose it is more desirable they be united.

If I am asked to assign reasons why the churches referred to should become one, I would be tempted to say that I know no solid reason why they should continue apart. In our prescribed forms for marrying parties in England, we make the young couple repeat certain words after us. These words I should be glad to utter now, were it possible to induce the churches interested to pronounce them after me, thus, "I know of no *lawful impediment*" why the United Presbyterian Church "should not be joined in matrimony" to the Free Church of Scotland, etc.

The benefits which I would expect to flow from this alliance would be such as these, to deepen the piety, improve the preaching, and increase the power of the bodies uniting. Deepen the piety—since in preparing for a union and afterwards there is always much prayer, and where men seek much they receive much. "The Lord hearkens and hears, and a book of remembrance is written before him." Besides, union would save the time which is now devoted to the praise of ourselves. There may be found ministers in all the churches proposing to unite, who strive to impress their people with the pre-eminence of their own denomination. Let union be effected, and the preaching that was employed to their own praise is no longer admitted. Instead of it, we may confidently expect, Christ will be magnified as chief among ten thousands, and our people will love Him as they hear how He first loved them. Add to this, as already said by Mr. Taylor, that the spirit of unity has a special promise. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing." This has been our experience in former unions. Moreover, it would improve the preaching. If piety improve, it is certain the preaching will. We hold the preaching in our own denomination to be able and thoroughly evangelical. Christ is preached, and preached with power. But the same holds good in regard to the other churches with which union is proposed, and especially in the Free Church are found men of world-wide renown. Let all unite and a stimulus is given to all, while the mingling of mind and talent, operates as the mingling of nations in producing a people possessing health and energy. So it has been in other unions. Then with regard to power, I am reminded of what a Canadian minister said of a congregation whose appearance greatly pleased him, "That is a congregation capable of doing anything they please." Sir, with God's blessing, these churches in a united capacity might do wonders in extending and establishing the kingdom of Christ upon earth, and bringing the world to bow before Him.

Holding these views, I cannot doubt that the contemplated union is one that is settled with God. It is often said, that marriages are made in heaven. I feel assured it is so in this instance, and trust the day is not far distant when our eyes shall see what at present can only be assumed. But see it or not, let us pray for it, and work for it. On the day which consummated the union of the Relief and Secession churches, I walked arm in arm with Dr. James Robertson, and remarked to him, how much, had Drs. Hough and Balmer been here, they would have been gladdened by this sight. Who can tell, he replied, *but they do see it*. He, too, has gone to join them, and others must soon follow. Now, we have often heard eloquent declamation in pulpits about the unsectarian church above. No wall of separation there, no name recognised, but brethren and redeemed. Shall we wait for the spirit of heaven till we get there, or cultivate it here and now? "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad."

Rev. Dr. ANDREW THOMSON, who was received with applause, next ad-

dressed the Synod. He said—I do not think that it can be said with justice that this subject has been prematurely introduced into our Supreme Court. When we find it drawing together great public meetings in our large cities, becoming the subject of earnest discussion in our newspapers and magazines, and Presbyteries and Sessions sending up overtures calling to it the attention of their respective Supreme Courts, the time has passed away for our Synod remaining silent, and the time has arrived when the growing sentiment should be wisely guided, and find vent and expression in a constitutional manner. Since the subject has come before us in this natural and unforced way; since, moreover, my Session has an overture in favour of union on your table; and since I have once or twice been in some little degree wrought up with the movement out of doors, I am sure I shall not be deemed obtrusive by my fathers and brethren if, in the briefest possible manner, I state the reasons why I look, and why I think this Synod should look, with a friendly eye upon ultimate, and not very distant, union with our brethren in the Free Church—(applause). I set out, then, with this principle—which I do not expect that any one in this Synod will deny—that, where two or more Churches exist in the same country that are identical in doctrine, government, discipline, and worship, it is their duty to become incorporated in one visible fellowship—(applause). There ceases to be any ground in conscience for separation; and where no such ground can be pleaded, it is wrong to remain separate, and the nearer the Churches are to identity of opinion and practice on all such matters, the more unreasonable and unjustifiable is their remaining divided. Why retain the badge of difference where there is not the fact of difference?—(hear, hear) It seems to me that the question in such a case is not, what reason can you give for union? but what excuses can you assign for remaining separate? All the reasons that can be derived from economy, edification, increase of moral influence and power for good upon the world, as well as from regard to the will and even the prayer of our Divine Master, plead for Churches standing in such a relation becoming visibly and formally united; and all our own previous and happy unions are a practical acknowledgment of this principle—(hear, hear). I advance a step farther, and say that, where there exists a general sameness of opinion and practice between two Churches in the same country, and there is one point on which they do not yet quite see alike, it is their duty to ascertain by mutual conference whether the amount of the difference has not been exaggerated in the heat of controversy; or whether the new and favourable circumstances in which the providence of God has placed them within recent years may not have brought them considerably nearer to harmony of view; and whether, even supposing the difference to be real and far from insignificant, it is of such magnitude as to warrant its being made a term of ministerial communion; and, while preserving the right of individuals to think and express themselves on the subject according to their personal convictions, it should be allowed to stand for a single day as a barrier in the way of cordial incorporation and united action. I expect that I shall carry the unanimous convictions of my brethren in the Synod thus far also, because it was this principle which led to the negotiations that have already terminated in the two unions which form two of the brightest chapters and most blessed events in our history as a Church of Christ—(applause). But is this a merely hypothetical case? Or does it not describe the actual relation in which the Free and United Presbyterian Churches stand to each other? Our ministers and elders in both communions subscribe the same Confession of Faith, we observe the same sacraments, our manner of worship is the same, and so are our discipline and Church government. The one point on which we differ has respect to the power and province of the civil magistrate in religion. Even in regard to this, the Free Church holds, in common with ourselves, the supreme headship of Christ over the nations, and that he is sole King in Zion; it has, in its very act of disruption, and in more recent acts, nobly

asserted the principle of spiritual independence, and in its formula of ordination, its office-bearers eschew all persecuting and intolerant doctrines in religion. Many of its members, and not a few of its elders and deacons, go all our length on what is called the Voluntary principle. It creates a strong presumption in my mind that the point of difference is somewhat indefinite, and is likely to diminish and collapse when handled, that even among the more eminent Free Church ministers I have never found any two of them to state it quite alike—(hear, hear). I suspect, indeed, that the greater number of its ministers are not prepared to assert, in universal and unqualified terms, that there are no conceivable circumstances and conditions in which it would be wrong for a magistrate to confer, or in a Church to accept, endowments from the State. No conceivable circumstances, I say—for in reality this endowment principle has become to them a mere theory; and there is not a minister among them, as Dr. Buchanan told us on Wednesday evening, who would not indignantly refuse an endowment were it offered to him on the morrow—(applause). If I am wrong in supposing that this theoretical difference is all that lies between us, it is at least worth while inquiring on the subject, and defining and measuring the difference; and if this be all, or nearly all, is it a warrant for separation? Something else than conscience must be sought for as the real cause why, in such circumstances, we refuse to unite; and I suspect the explanation is to be found in the same unworthy cause in which Sir Cresswell Cresswell, in his Court of Probate, occasionally finds a reason for separating between husband and wife—incompatibility of temper between the parties—(laughter and applause). Now mark me, Moderator, I am not arguing, when I say all this, for immediate union between the two Churches, or even for union next year or the year following. This union, when it comes, must be a union not of Church Courts, but of Churches; not growing out of constraint, but out of conviction, mutual esteem, and affection. In our loyal letter of congratulation to the Prince of Wales, we have expressed our gratification that his marriage with the illustrious Princess of Denmark has not been the fruit of State policy, but of free choice and mutual love; and I should wish this ecclesiastical union, come when it may, to be of the same kind—(applause). It would be comparatively worthless, indeed, without it. When we unite, we must see that we carry the great mass of our people along with us; but what I contend for is that the time has arrived for frank and friendly negotiation—for the adoption of healing measures, for closer intercourse between the two Churches, and for pointing towards the goal of union; and to allude to an illustration by the venerable Sir George Sinclair, while I have no intention to travel by an express-train to this terminus of union, I have as little intention to come up through the night by the luggage truck, I would travel with all the speed consistent with safety, and that would secure me the company of my brethren all the way in the journey; and travel as I might, I should never think of timidly asking, when setting out, for a return-ticket—(laughter and applause). It occurs to me that we may sometimes be too near an object to judge of its proportions, and that we would be the better to learn what our foreign brethren think of our matters of difference. Now, perhaps my friend Mr. Marshall, with his dialectic gift, might be able to make the matter of difference clear to our deputies from foreign countries; but I confess that I have failed; and I well remember that when I once succeeded in making the thing dimly palpable to my venerated friend Dr. Frederick Monod of Paris, he replied with a shrug such as no one but a Frenchman can give, "Is that all that divides you! Ah! were you in my country, with Popery powerful on the one hand and infidelity on the other, you would unite to-morrow, to resist the common adversary"—(applause). If I am asked what advantages do I anticipate from such a union, were it to take place in the manner and spirit I have described, I answer—there is always an advantage in following in the line of duty; and

I hold it to be our demonstrated duty to unite, where there is no reason of a conscientious kind to keep us apart. It would provide against an evil which I cannot help thinking we have begun to experience already, that of overchurching districts for the sake of maintaining our denominational position—(hear, hear). It would remove many strong temptations to laxity of discipline, and to unholy jealousy and rivalry. It would put it in our power to economize in many departments of our Church organization; it would remove a stumbling-block out of the way of men of the world; it would greatly increase our energy and power for good, as all our unions are admitted to have done, the united bodies not only doubling their strength but multiplying it manifold—(hear, and applause); it would present the grandest example to all Christendom of the power of the Voluntary system, by showing how an undowered Church could not only effectively occupy every nook of Scotland with a vigorous evangelism, but overflow with renewed life and swelling tide into the regions beyond. It would make our arms free for helping the weak in foreign countries, and for the moral conquest of the world—(cheers). And I do not scruple to add that with tendencies showing themselves, in certain quarters in Scotland to a kind of mimic Episcopacy, and to speak with a slighting indifference not only of creeds and confessions, but of the truths which these enshrine—I would look to a free, undowered, evangelical Presbyterian Church as the great conservator and defender for Scotland of the faith once delivered unto the saints. I wish to remark here that we are all indebted to the Free Church. I do not principally refer to the noble illustration which that Church has given of the power of the Voluntary principle, not simply for self-support, but for self-extension, though we do owe much to the Free Church for this; but I refer yet more to the grand moral spectacle which was given to Scotland and to the world by the fact of the Disruption. There was a tendency among many to think of ministers as hirelings in their spirit; but when those five hundred men walked out from St. Andrew's Church down to the Canonmills Hall, Lord Jeffrey looking down with tears of admiration from a window in Hanover Street, there was not a minister in all Scotland whose moral strength was not increased by the event. It was one of those facts which improve the moral health of nations. The whole Christian ministry was elevated and benefited by it—(much cheering). If I am asked, then, what I would suggest as initial steps towards this union, I would point to four measures, in reference to none of which it is likely that there will be any difference in this Synod:—1. That there be an increased interchange of ministerial services among the ministers of the two communions; 2. That there be a recognition of each other's discipline in the two Churches; 3. That in the planting of new churches, respect be had to each other's operations; and 4. That a Committee be appointed to meet with a similar Committee that may be appointed by the General Assembly of the Free Church, for frank and friendly conference on the subject of union, and also for the purpose of recommending these practical measures to the adoption of the sister Church. I shall only add, that I anticipate much present good from the adoption of these temperate proposals, while they seem fitted to prepare the way for something better beyond. It has struck me much that in proportion as men become holier, they become more desirous for union, as if they were unconsciously feeling after and ripening for the higher and more perfect union of heaven—(hear, hear). Men, like the good Archbishop Usher, have even from the impulse of their strong charity sought a measure of comprehension which is impracticable; but Howe and Baxter longed and prayed and pleaded for union; and the late Principal Cunningham, with his gigantic intellect and large heart, became more anxious for union as he became older and holier. The late Dr. Brown, whose name can never be mentioned in this Synod without veneration, repeatedly said to me on those more solemn

occasions, when he had recently come forth from his closet, that if there was anything in the future more certain than another, it was a union between the Free and United Presbyterian Churches. And I do not betray any confidence when I mention that the genial and warm-hearted Dr. Guthrie, a few weeks since in an interview with some members of this Synod, with much feeling expressed his thankfulness that in the first speech which he delivered in the Free Assembly immediately after the Disruption, he expressed a hope that he should live to see these two Churches made one. I do not think the union need be very long delayed; but even should many of us never live to see this temple of peace and concord erected in our days, it would be well for us to have at least gathered the materials for it, and God will say of us, as of David, "It was good that it was in your hearts to do it." Dr. Thomson sat down amid long-continued applause.

The CLERK (Rev. Mr. BECKET) read the following letter from Dr. JOHNSTON :—

"May 14, 1863.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Will you have the kindness to express to the Synod my deep regret that I cannot be present at the discussion on the overtures for union with our brethren of the Free Church? The cause of my absence is the death of a very dear friend in Dumfriesshire, whose funeral takes place on this day; and a variety of circumstances conspire to render it necessary that I should be present at it rather than at the Synod. I have no fear, however, that the important question of union will suffer from my absence. It is in good hands, and ample justice will be done to it. It would have given myself great satisfaction to have helped it forward in however small a degree. I have ever felt the deepest interest in the question of union with the Free Church; and that interest has deepened and grown in importance by recent events, which, I think, conspire to point to union as one of the most pressing duties of the two Churches. Had I been privileged to take part in the discussion, I would have endeavoured to show that *our Church*, from its very constitution, is bound to hold forth the right hand of fellowship to, and to seek union with all Free Evangelical Churches of Christ; that union with the Free Church is pre-eminently dutiful, on account of the position occupied by both Churches in the country; and the all but entire accordance in doctrine, worship, and administration between the two Churches, should make union comparatively easy to be accomplished. There are differences on some points, but they are so insignificant compared with the great and all-important matters in which they are thoroughly agreed, that the former require only to be candidly considered in order to their satisfactory adjustment. There is, at any rate, no point which cannot be made a matter of forbearance.

"The greatest difficulties to be found on both sides resolve themselves into prejudices and feelings naturally enough excited by the origin and relative position of the two Churches. These cannot be removed by argument. Christian kindness cultivated by all parties, friendly intercourse, mutual assistance, and, above all, a hearty desire for the union, and earnest prayer for it, will do much to remove difficulties, and prepare the way for its consummation. *Let nothing be hurried.* In this case *festina lente* will, in the end, be found to be real and rapid progress. The union, I firmly believe, will take place, and when it does, it will be the most glorious day that Scotland has seen since the days of its reformation from Popery.

"Again I express my deep regret that I am prevented, in the providence of God, from taking a part, however humble, in this most interesting discussion.—I am, dear sir, yours cordially,

GEORGE JOHNSTON."

The Rev. Dr. KING of London, who was received with loud applause, said—I readily acknowledge that unions cannot be precipitated. Difficulties which are

conscientiously felt are entitled to all respect; and if we should presume to disregard them, and overrule them by mere votes, we should be less likely to reduce differences than to multiply disruptions—(hear, hear, and applause). In what I may now say, then, I would not be understood to make light of scruples, or to advocate haste. It would be a severer censure than I have the temerity to pass on the religion of our land if I were to allege that all its demarcations have been arbitrary, and that the many pious men who have respected them had not some reasons, and even considerable reasons, for their distinctive professions. At the same time, all will admit that caution, good in its own place, may become evil through excess, and that we must not be so in love with the past or the present as to make it a rule of faith, and deprecate improvement—(hear, hear, and applause). Let us ever remember that among evangelical Christians the rule is union, and not simply an essential but a manifested union—(applause)—such union as will evidence to the world the divinity of Christ's mission, and cause it to know that God has sent Him—(applause). To that issue the spirit, commands, and promises of the Gospel all tend. What is Christ's summary of the Law? Love. But charity does not dis sever; it is the bond of perfectness. What is the subject of Christ's prayers? The unity of his people: that they all may be one "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." What was the object of His death? Reconciliation. By this stupendous sacrifice God reconciles all things to Himself, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth. What is the pervading apostolic counsel to disputants? Not dis severance but forbearance; a constant and dominating effort to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"—(applause). If such be the rule, the burden of proof lies with those who plead for exceptions—(hear, hear)—but we are apt to feel otherwise. We are prone to make the question this, Are we at liberty to unite? Till every Shibboleth is got over dare we allow ourselves this freedom? But the true and just question is, Are we at liberty to divide? and have we breakwaters strong enough to stem and to partition the river which "maketh glad the city of God?"—(hear, hear). In deciding this question we ought to keep in mind that our prepossessions are naturally against union. Our agreements we do not need to defend. Why any defence of what is unattacked? The disputed border is the battle-field. Hence thought, and affection, and argument have been accumulated on distinctive and differing beliefs, till they acquire all the importance and all the sacredness of heroic championship and endeared associations. While we stand apart, too, from one another, we have difficulty in doing any work without coming into collision. Separate interests clash; and if a union be proposed, every minister finds some ground of offence and alarm and hesitancy in the wrongs and jealousies of his own locality or his immediate neighbourhood. There is a misleading bias yet more influential, because yet more amiable, on the side of disunion. It seems dishonouring to our position to regard it as fractional, and we give to a part the character of a whole. We may not call our sect "our Zion," because this manifest antagonism to Scripture would strike and rebuke us. We own that there is one Zion, and that it is built as a city compactly together; but whatever the lips may say, the sectarian expression is the language of emotion, and we say it in our hearts—(hear, hear). Nor is it wonderful we should make so much of our particular denomination. It has been instrumentally all in all to us—all our instruction, all our consolation—identified alike with the remembrance of our fathers and our hopes from our offspring—(applause). Hence we are slow to form new alliances which might seem to depreciate or which might weaken the old. Our Church! What words could be more suggestive of all that we most value or would like to preserve!—(applause). I have looked on some goodly stream—a stream beautiful in itself, adorned by banks, dens, woods, cascades—frequented by the tourist for pleasure, and the invalid for health—the pride of a country and the inspiration of its

songs. I have looked on such a stream, and I have felt as if with consciousness it would prize its beloved and admired individuality; as if it would grudge to pass on and leave behind all distinctive charms, its name and renown, and to all lovers of nature its exquisite fascinations, and suffer all to be merged and lost in the undistinguishable ocean—(applause). To my reminiscences and sympathies this Church, this Synod, is such a stream; and if any of other Churches say, What party conceit, what arrant bigotry! I have only to say, Perhaps so; and yet of such conceit and such bigotry I find it difficult to be ashamed—(loud applause). But, after all, this is sentimentalism, not spirituality. When I open the New Testament I find it not there. No Church there but the associated members of Christ's mystical body; and of any partiality, no matter how specious and attractive, that would rend it asunder and tear limb from limb, I find the warning given, "If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me"—(applause). Beyond our ecclesiastical framework, we have no difficulty in associating with other evangelical brethren. From co-operation with eminent men of the Free Church I have reaped only pleasant fruits, and it has seemed to me that I needed only more of such intercourse to find these fruits still more abundant and still more delicious—(applause). Enter our sanctuaries, and there is nothing in our worship to indicate its special connexion. Even in our Courts we aim at like ends by like means; and scarcely any differences are discoverable till we begin to discuss them. If these things are so—and the truth of the representation seems to me undeniable—then would not every disinterested observer draw from them the conclusion that we are doing injustice to identifying essentials, and under local or historic influences are allowing circumstantials to be invested with adventitious consequence? But then we must not compromise truth. This has been the cry of every schismatic. But what if truth through all its grand constituents demands union?—(applause). If we accept the religion of Christ as the word of the truth of the Gospel, what does it more earnestly enjoin upon us than to be of one heart and one mind in the Lord?—(applause). Truth not only demands union; it unites. If we had more truth we should have more charity, and more of its assimilating manifestations; for faith worketh by love—(applause). We all see the effects of disseverances, and I require not to depict them. Think what would be the effects of contemplated union! Where divisions have made English Presbyterians a weakness and a reproach, incorporation would immediately render us a respected power in the country—(hear, hear). We should exert in England such an influence for good, even on the Established Church, as Evangelical Dissent has already and confessedly exerted on the Establishment in Scotland—(applause). Presbyterianism on the Continent would hail such commendation to its principles, and invigoration to its alliance—(applause). The day of union would be a day of jubilee. There is not a class in these realms, down from her gracious Majesty to her meanest subjects, but would hear its announcements—so clear, and loud, and thrillingly would its silver trumpets sound, and the moral effect would vibrate to the ends of the earth—(loud applause). Are you prepared to forego all this, or even defer all this? I am not—(loud applause). In the contemplation of it, my apprehensions change sides, and from dreading ill-assorted combinations, I dread the result of schism and its sorrows—(hear, hear). Two facts have more weighed with me than any reasonings. The eminent men of our Church with whom Providence has brought me into contact have been mostly and characteristically unionists, and they have become increasingly so towards the close of their career. When I was newly licensed, I had an appointment to preach for Dr. Pringle of Perth, and I could never forget a conversation with him. Its words indeed I forget, but its substance—I trust in some measure its spirit—rest with me. In fatherly and affectionate accents he indicated to me that he had been long very jealous about landmarks, and he was far from despising

ing them still ; but he had come to discover that every one of them did not define a holy land or a widow's inheritance—(laughter and applause)—and he had come to accept with more comprehensive import and more entire self-surrender the mandate given us, Love the brotherhood—(applause). This personal history was delicate advice, and I feel at this moment as if he had given it to me not only for acceptance but for transmission—(applause). Let me disappear, then, in thought from our younger brethren. Let them behold instead that venerable patriarch while he smiles upon them with benignant regards and prayerful hopes, and, uncoiling the map of life, points with the finger of devout experience in the direction of concord, and says with accents almost valedictory, “That is the way ; walk ye in it”—(applause). I might state many like incidents, report many such remarks made to me by such men in their studies or on their deathbeds, but I only say in general, that to the extent of my observation, and more immediately within the range of my friendships, a lessening estimate of differences, and enlarging estimate of agreements, has been one of the distinguishing marks of ripening for glory—(applause). Another fact which weighs much with me is, that unions already formed have falsified only fears, and have fulfilled and exceeded hopes—(applause)—but on this point and others I must not detain you. The tribes of Israel, in going to the Holy City, went from strength to strength. The meaning may be from company to company. Companies met in the way and melted into each other. To meet was an evidence of approaching Jerusalem ; to part was a symptom of retiring from it—(loud applause). When the festival was over, the tribes might legitimately leave and return to the dwellings of Jacob from the gates of Zion. But heaven's festival is never over. No retirement from it, therefore, is warranted ; only approach is appointed and allowed—(applause). Beloved friends and brethren, I ask the sign of such approximation. I may be rash, but I am sincere in wishing to see company joining company ; and next to the conception of heaven itself, I like this conflux of travellers before entering its portals and joining its countless myriads in uplifting its songs—(applause). No fear of crowding. The gates will be opened wide to heaven, anticipating charity, and so an abundant entrance will be ministered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—(applause). I only remind you further, that though you may put back these unions, there is a union which you cannot defer. When I look around me, I miss, sadly miss, many valued friends. Before me I see noble youth, and I almost envy such features of promise, having such a future. These sons are here ; our fathers, where are they ? The same question rises from other bereaved Churches, and the answer is not found in many courts, but in one cloud of witnesses compassing us all about ; and I feel as if such embrace should bring us all to brotherhood, and as if it were not so much a time to pray for heaven as to be adopting its unity, and so far exemplifying its bliss—(applause). Perhaps I appeal to feeling, and you mistrust such advocacy. Be it so. It has long appeared to me that the wisdom which is from above has less to do with the head than with the heart—(applause)—and that they seldom err far or long who follow the dictates of Christian affection. In any case I retract nothing from these pleadings. Ten years have elapsed since I stood in this Synod—(applause). What may be in the future we know not ; but if I should never return, I do not think it will burden my conscience that my last words here were for the peace of Jerusalem, as related and equivalent to good unto Zion—(loud applause). I suppose it is not the time as yet to make a motion. I may mention, however, that a distinguished minister of the Free Church expressed to me his persuasion that they would go into the measure if we would appoint a committee to meet with one of theirs, for mutual conference on this subject—(cries of “Move, move”). Then I move—“That a committee be appointed to consider this subject in all its bearings, and to report ; and more immediately to meet with any committee which may be appointed

by the Free Church, or any other of the Churches mentioned in the overtures ; and confer with them as to our relative position, and the steps proper to be taken to promote present co-operation and ultimate union"—(prolonged applause).

The Rev. HENRY RENTON, of Kelso, said—The subject before us is one on which much has been advanced, as there always may be, which it is pleasant to hear, and to which no objection can be made. It is when we descend from generalities to particulars, from the theoretical to the practical, that difficulties are encountered. In a landscape, a particular point may attract the eye of the spectator, and seem to him very desirable to reach—and at no great distance—and easily attainable ; while he makes no account of the rivers and ravines that intervene, and which render the best, or it may be the only practicable, route circuitous and tedious. It is a matter of very devout thanksgiving that among the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland there are many and great points of agreement. It is not for a moment to be questioned that by their co-operation many and great benefits may be effected. Some things have been advanced in the able and interesting addresses of the respected brethren who have just spoken, to which I may take preliminary exception. For example, in advocating peace and union, as my beloved brother Dr. King eloquently did in his peroration, it must not be assumed that those who do not concur in his motion, or in any similar motion, are adverse to the peace or union of the Church of Christ—(hear, hear). I find it assumed—certainly latently, if not avowedly—in several of the addresses, that in order to union there must be incorporation. We have had repeated reference to the position of Christ as King of the Church and as King of the Nations. Now, I am one of those who believe firmly in a coming time when there will be universal peace and universal union among the nations of the earth under our great Head, the God-man, Christ Jesus. But I do not anticipate that, when that time comes, union will consist in the incorporation of all the nations of the earth into one civil empire, of which they shall constitute the several provinces under an illustrious temporal monarch, or the several states under a great confederacy. I believe they will have their separate nationalities and their several governments, and that their peace and union will result from the confidence and brotherhood with which they regard and act towards each other under the influence of their common and heavenly King. No more do I anticipate that when that time comes, when the Church shall be universal over the earth—when the people shall all speak a pure language—that one of the distinctions of that time will consist in the whole of the Churches on the earth being incorporated under one central government, whether of a Synod or an Episcopate. On this general ground I demur to the assumption which has been made—I wish more proof and evidence on that point than has ever come before me yet—that in order to such union the Head of the Church intends incorporation as necessary, any more than that we should all give up our several domestic establishments to be incorporated into one great family in ordinary arrangements—(laughter). It appears to me that there are, to the union now proposed, and to which some would proceed so rapidly (cries of “No, no”), several difficulties of a formidable nature, and that our business is to look at these difficulties. If union is to take place between two parties who differ in fundamental principles, it involves, it implies, if it does not provide for, silence on the points of difference. How can there at present be union between the non-Established Presbyterian Churches of Scotland without involving in the Church Courts, and in all ecclesiastical action, silence on, or suppression of, one truth for which this Church has contended—that the Church of Christ may no more depend on the civil power for her support than she may allow to the civil power her control ? That principle alone secures perfect liberty for religion ; that principle alone secures the exclusion of Cabinets and Parliaments from the whole category of politico-religious

questions, which occasion to Statesmen more embarrassment and perplexity and dishonour, and to the public morals more injury, than all other domestic questions put together—(applause). Sir, to my mind, the maintenance of that principle is more important than any union (hear, hear) which would involve its suppression, or the infringement of my liberty in its advocacy—(cheers). I would rather be a minister of the smallest Evangelical Presbyterian Church that maintained that principle, than I would be of the largest in Christendom that denied it, or held it in practical abeyance—(applause). Do you ask me, why so? Because I know not, within the whole range of my survey, one single obstacle to the union of the different parts of Christ's Church to be named with the principle of civil authority in religion; and if you ask me, what is the grand obstacle to union between this and every Presbyterian Church in this land, I say it is the assertion and operation of that principle—(hear, hear, and applause). If you can take that out of the way, then I do see my way clear to go forward on the right and the left, surmounting every other obstacle—(applause). But I do not believe in the furtherance of the peace of Christ's Church, or in the ultimate union of its members by the compromise, and far less by the surrender, of that principle. It has been assumed, it has even been asserted, that the difference between this Church and the Free Church—the largest of those bodies with which union is proposed—is theoretical—is speculative—(applause). I much wonder at that assertion. The difference is not merely theoretical, but practical and prominent between the two Churches. Has not this Church emphatically, unanimously, and repeatedly affirmed the principle, that it is not within the province of the civil magistrate to provide for the religious instruction of the subject? And having as distinctly, as decidedly, and as resolutely put forth that principle as words can express it, it has unanimously opposed the provision on the part of the State of religious instruction for schools; while the Free Church holds, that the State both may and ought to provide religious instruction. Is that a mere theory of the Free Church? They receive that support—they have received it for these many years—they do the very thing we oppose and condemn;—and I have the belief—in which I am not singular by any means—that there would not have been known in Scotland support from the State funds for religious instruction in Popish schools but for the acceptance of that support for religious instruction in their schools by the Free Church—(hear, hear, and cheers). There is nothing connected with Presbyterianism which I feel with deeper poignancy and humiliation than these two facts: that the reception of the *Regium Donum* by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland—containing, as I rejoice to think, such a number of admirable men personally—and the acceptance of State support for the schools of the Free Church in Scotland, have obtained State support for Romish schools and Romish priests, which I believe, but for the conduct of these two bodies, they never would have obtained in this empire, and which I believe it may take a second battle of the Reformation to undo—(hear, hear, and cheers). Sir, this is to my mind a point of great moment, which you cannot get over by talking of it as an abstraction, or speculation, or mere theory. I quite agree with the sentiments which have been expressed that you must have a manifestation of preparation for this union. It cannot be one-sided any more than it can be rash. I believe that the foundation of all right union must be mutual esteem, mutual regard, and mutual confidence. I desiderate the manifestation of these (applause) before we talk of union. If I see a denomination, in planting its congregations, lengthening its cords, and strengthening its stakes, making of no account the congregations of other denominations, but proceeding precisely as if, where the population were not taught through its instrumentality, the population were not taught at all; as if, where there was no religious instruction provided through its instrumentality, religious instruction was not provided at all—I say that is the arrogance and usurpation of old Popery, it is the arrogance and insolence of the old Establishments—(hear.) No man

concurs more than I do with all that has been said of members and ministers of the Free Church, many of whom, for their character, sentiments, and services, I hold in the highest esteem. But we have to do in a matter of this kind not with the sentiments and cases of individuals, but with the procedure of the denomination. I look at what has characterized its authorized operations, and I desiderate evidence of those sentiments of which I speak, that mark the existence of real brotherhood, and real recognition that we stand on a parity as fellow-ministers, as fellow-servants, and as fellow-Churches of Christ Jesus—(applause). Reference has been made to a variety of difficulties and objections other than the accidental ones which Dr. Cairns adverted to in the beginning of his admirable address, with his views on which I entirely concur. I believe that there are practical difficulties when you come to such questions as those relating to finance, the management of accounts, and especially the sustentation of ministers and the tenure of property. All our congregations are the proprietors of their own churches and manse. That is not the case in the Free Church, where no congregation has any control of its property. There are a variety of points of that kind, practical, perhaps formidable, though to my mind not insuperable. But on the grounds which I have stated, and on which I forbear to enlarge, I humbly submit that we are not in a condition to take any direct step, while as yet the opinions of our own Church are not even evoked. You do not at present know what the sentiments of our Church are; you have taken no means for ascertaining them. I am not prepared to go into committee; I am not prepared to send the overtures down to presbyteries; but I have no objections that they should lie on the table for future consideration. In this and other matters I am open to light. I have no foregone conclusion. My stand is on principle; my difficulties are there. I beg therefore to conclude with the motion, "That the overtures lie on the table to afford the Church time for their consideration"—(applause.)

The Rev. JOHN COOPER of Fala said, that he rose in opposition to a statement which he saw made in one of the public journals, in reference to the great subject they were now discussing. It was therein affirmed, that the advocates for this union were ministers of large churches, doctors of divinity, and leading men in large towns; but that if we went into rural districts we should scarcely find one of the ministers open his mouth on the subject. It was said that this was owing to the fact that, in cities where the population is large, ministers felt but slightly the opposition of one congregation to another; that they met with Free Church ministers at public meetings, and so and so forth; but go into the country, where the population is thin, and it would be found that there was such a feeling against union, that no minister would advocate it. He stood there in direct opposition to that statement—(applause). Moderator, I am not a minister of a city charge, or of a large and influential church; I am not a doctor in divinity.—Professor McMichael—"You ought to be one"—(applause).—Well, greatly am I obliged to you for your kindly feelings; but I am only a country minister in a thinly peopled district, and yet I yield to no man in ardent desire for the union of churches, and in advocating the union or the unions in question. I have Free Church ministers around me, and have preached in several of their pulpits, especially in that of my excellent friend Mr. Thorburn, whom I am happy to see seated amongst us—(applause)—and whose heart, I know, beats responsive to all the kindly feelings we can possibly give utterance to. If union were even now to take place, it would not make much difference to me individually, as all the intercourse I enjoy with brethren of the Free Church is as friendly and hearty as if the union had actually taken place—(applause). Moderator, I am desirous of stating that I am fully alive to the difficulties that lie in the way of the incorporation of the two churches. I realize them more fully, and feel them more deeply, than several brethren

with whom I have conversed on the subject; they are numerous theoretically, and still more numerous and serious practically; but what then? Am I to go along with Mr. Renton in his proposal for delay; far, very far from it—(applause). Let us look them fairly in the face, let us converse with our brethren in a friendly spirit regarding them. It may be that union will not be the result; but misunderstanding will be removed, kindly feelings will be cherished, the churches will be brought into more intimate fellowship with each other. Should nothing further be the result, I hold that those are great objects gained. Sir, allow me to say that I have been forty-one years a minister, and in the course of that long service have experienced that not a few difficulties, which at a distance appeared very formidable, have lessened and lessened as they were approached, and have finally been overcome. We stand on vantage-ground on this subject, and let us not shut our eyes to the lessons that have been taught us. I have myself witnessed two unions, although only a student when the first took place. Well do I remember the hopeless feeling with which the union between the Burgher and anti-Burgher section of the Church was regarded by many. It seemed to them, and was talked of by them, as a step next to impossible. The union of the Secession and the Relief Churches occupied ten years, from the time it was first proposed to the period of its consummation. All know that all difficulties finally gave way, and how peaceful and happy now when Burgher and anti-Burgher and Relief are all merged into the United Presbyterian Church—(applause.) I know not on what authority Mr. Renton asserts that we are hastening union. None in the house is advocating haste, and none I have ever met with beyond these walls, whether of the Free Church or of our own, are anxious for haste. All that is wanted at present are preliminary measures. Let these be calmly, earnestly, and prayerfully entered into and prosecuted, and, under the blessing of the great Head of the Church, most happy indeed may be the final result. I beg leave, Sir, to second Dr. King's motion. It may be taken as an evidence of the unity of sentiment and feeling in different sections of our Church, that this motion has been proposed by a great city Doctor, and seconded by a plain country minister—(much applause).

The Rev. Mr. MARSHALL, of Coupar-Angus, said—I would not have risen but for the remarks which have been made by Mr. Renton, and I rise to implore my very much respected brother to withdraw that motion (applause), that we may have no more controversy about it—(applause). I have been a Voluntary. I am a Voluntary, as thorough a Voluntary, as stern a Voluntary (laughter and cheers), and as consistent a Voluntary (renewed laughter and applause), as Mr. Renton is; and had Dr. King's motion proposed to Mr. Renton and me that we should surrender our Voluntaryism (applause), I should not have agreed to it—(applause). Does Dr. King's motion propose any such thing? Does Mr. Renton imagine that any such thing, or the shadow of it, is in the head of any man, and least of all in the head of such a man as Dr. King?—(applause). Has Mr. Renton forgotten the veneration with which all his life he has regarded Dr. King, so far as to suppose that Dr. King does not realize the difficulties in the way of this union as thoroughly as Mr. Renton does?—(laughter and cheers). Why, Dr. King's motion is a motion to set machinery in operation, not for surrendering our Voluntaryism, or anything we hold dear, but for conferring with Christian friends to see whether we cannot come to understand one another, and unite on such a basis, that neither they nor we shall surrender one iota of what we hold to be sacred principle—(hear, hear, and applause). I am pained beyond measure that our brother Mr. Renton has so far mistaken the state of the case before us, in consequence of the motion of Dr. King, as to submit any such motion; and not a little he has said in support of his motion has pained me almost as much as the motion itself. One

thing I am happy to say Mr. Renton has proved to me, viz., that he has not in his own mind reconnoitred the ground which he is aiming at taking, and that, upon further consideration, Mr. Renton will not be an obstacle in our way—(applause). Mr. Renton has some theory about incorporating union as contrasted with some other union of which he did not furnish us with a name—at least my blunt ear did not catch the name. Mr. Renton is looking shy upon this proposed union with non-established Churches in the country for this reason, that he thinks that even the millennium, when it comes, may not bring incorporated union. Moderator, has the millennium come?—(laughter and cheers). Has it actually arrived? We have been accustomed to look forward to the millennium as the age of union—the age when the prayer of the Lord, that his disciples “may all be one,” and which his Church has been offering for the last eighteen centuries, shall be fully answered. Will it be answered in anything less than their visible corporation? I say that with all those Churches to which the overtures refer, so far as I know, I am one already in reality (applause), and we are all one with them already in reality upon all that concerns the essentials and vitals of Christianity. Is there to be no other union than this till the millennium comes?—(laughter and applause). Is that what Mr. Renton means? or does he propose in his motion to call a halt till the millennium comes?—(renewed laughter and applause). I am sure when Mr. Renton considers the matter, he must see that there is some truth and some force in what I have said—(applause). Moderator, you have seen many things in your day; you have seen Synods for sixty-three years. I ask you to say, “Did you ever see a Synod like this?” (applause). We in our ecclesiastical assemblies are accustomed to a variety of manifestations—(laughter). I speak of them because it is of a manifestation to-day that I wish to utter a single word. We have our passages at arms and our keen debates. We have our pleasantries and our humours. We indulge them, and we need in these long sittings to be relieved now and then with a hearty laugh—(laughter and applause). But we have our moments of solemnity; and while some brethren have been crediting me with an eye to see in some directions, I claim for myself the credit of a heart to feel—(applause). You, Moderator, have seen sixty-three years’ of Synods and ecclesiastical assemblies like this. I have seen the half of that number; but I think you will agree with me in saying that you and I have never seen any such assembly as we have witnessed to-day—(applause). And further, I say, and I say it plainly—although I am speaking on the impulse of the moment, and from my heart rather than my head, still I speak it plainly, and I shall rejoice if it is correctly taken and goes to the world—I say that if this great cause shall be met in other Churches, and in that other Church the Assembly of which meets by-and-by, as it has been met here to-day, the union cannot be distant—(applause). I anticipate that if this committee is appointed, and if it is met by a corresponding committee in any of those other Churches, such committees may be of great service in mitigating, if not removing entirely, the difficulties in the way of union—(applause). I anticipate much from such committees; but I have a great deal more reliance upon such sentiments and feelings as have been making our hearts so to thrill and our eyes so to run down this day—(hear, hear). Give us scenes like these, let us be met with them in other Churches, and I shall concur with the friend who told me not many weeks ago that his conviction was that the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church would be one ere ten years passed away—(applause). I would not wonder if you yourself, Moderator, should live to see, if not the consummation of the union, at least the certain signs of its speedy approach—(loud cheers).¹

¹ Mr. Marshall desires us to state that his speech was cut short by the arrival of the hour of adjournment (four P.M.); and that had he resumed the discussion at the evening sederunt, which he would have done but for his unwillingness to occupy

The Rev. Mr. GUNION, Strathaven, said—I deeply grieve that Mr. Renton should have said some things which he said in reference to the Free Church—(hear, hear). I was deeply grieved that after the solemn statements we had been listening to, any member of this Court could have referred at all to such grievances as those to which allusion was made. I was a minister of this Church on the Border for a good many years, and all through the course of my ministerial life my experience seems to have been exactly the reverse of Mr. Renton's—(hear, hear). I never felt practically there that there was any distinction between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian. We were essentially one, and they were always ready to strengthen our hands and encourage our hearts in every emergency—(hear, hear). But while I am sorry that Mr. Renton has made a motion giving the go-by, as it were, to these overtures, I cannot go all the length of the motion so eloquently expounded by our esteemed friend and father, Dr. King. I agreed with Mr. Renton in some remarks which he made, and I agreed with him heart and soul when he said that he would rather be the minister of the smallest Presbyterian body that kept true to the principle that the magistrate must not interfere in matters of religion than the minister of the most extensive denomination that put that principle in abeyance—(applause). I agreed with him in that sentiment heart and soul; and would that he had spoken in that strain alone all through this Synod. It was the strain I was accustomed to hear him speak in Synod after Synod within these walls. We cannot put our great distinctive principle in the background—(hear, hear). It may not be a term of communion in our Church. I know that it is not, and I don't hope that it ever will. It may not be that, sir; but our Church has no meaning—it has no apology for its existence at all—it should have taken itself out of the way many a year ago—unless it is prepared to keep that testimony prominent and conspicuous before the world—(applause). Reference has been made to venerable fathers and brethren to-day, and, as Mr. Marshall said, it was difficult for us with unmoistened eyes to listen to these references. But when I recall our Heughs, our Marshalls, and our Strutherses, and one perhaps not so great as these, but equally dear to me from long personal connexion, our Harveys, I may be allowed to say—(applause)—when I recall these men, I ask the Synod—“What is their distinction?” What is the glory with which we surround their names? From whence comes it? Is it not that in darker days than these; is it not that, when a remark of Dr. King's yesterday was truer far than, blessed be God, it is now, that to be a Dissenter was to endure poverty as bad as persecution; is it not that then, despising the social position and the emoluments which they might otherwise have received, principle was dearer to them than anything else beside?—(applause). I would not have presumed to address this Court this afternoon at all were I speaking in my individual capacity, but I know that I represent ministers of my own standing, and, I am thankful, younger men as well; and it is not altogether without deliberation or consultation either

more of the time of the Synod, he would have more fully expressed his belief that the difficulties in the way of union are not insuperable. They centre in a difference of view on the one question of civil establishments of Christianity. As a difficulty in the way of union, this has been surmounted in the United Presbyterian Church, in which the question referred to is a matter of forbearance, and has never marred the harmony of the body. The difficulty has also been practically surmounted in the Free Church, which notoriously includes in its membership many holding the Voluntary principle. This one difference, moreover, has been no bar to the varied and increasing and delightful fellowship which many in these two Churches have been indulging in their state of separation; and why should it be a bar to their union? He (Mr. M.), like many of his brethren, has weekly communion with friends of the Free Church in the exercises of religion; he has exchanged pulpits with ministers of that Church; he has had sacramental intercourse with them; and all such experiences have satisfied him—and had time permitted he would have pleaded them as satisfying him—that the difficulties in the way of union are not only not insuperable, but that they are much less formidable than some reckon them.

with those to whose judgment I defer, that perhaps recklessly, but still honestly, and with all devotion to the cause of this Church I beg to propose the following motion :—"That this Synod cordially sympathize with the spirit and aim of the overtures, express their respect and esteem for the Churches referred to in the overtures, look forward with gratification to the prospect of being incorporated with those Churches, recommend meanwhile Presbyteries and congregations under their inspection to co-operate in every possible way with all the unendowed Presbyterian Churches which accept the Westminster Confession of Faith, and appoint a committee to treat with any committee that may be appointed by the Free Church Assembly or by the Synods of the Reformed or English Presbyterian Churches ; but at the same time declare that any union must have in its basis no compromise of this Synod's distinctive testimony with regard to the civil Magistrate's power in matters of religion."

The Rev. JAMES S. TAYLOR, Glasgow, seconded Mr. Renton's motion. He trusted the day might come when there might be a union, and he thought it was of great importance that they should even encourage gentlemen to come forward with their practical difficulties. It was important that the first step should not be a mistaken step. If union was to take place, the difficulties must be brought out, and he would say that the historical statement of the Free Church was one of his difficulties. In that statement the Free Church embodied their views of the cause of their being compelled to leave the State—namely, because the Civil Courts had adjudicated their case in a way not compatible with the union which had been formed between the Church and the country. Now, that was ground which he could not homologate ; consequently, if there were to be a union, it would be necessary that their testimony on that point should disappear. That difficulty was one of the reasons why the Relief Church did not send a deputation to the Free Church at the Disruption, because they felt that had they gone, they would have been under the necessity of declaring that whatever reasons the Free Church had for coming out from the union with the State, there was no persecution on the part of the Civil Courts. Then the question of finance would be a difficulty. Then the Voluntary principle would be a difficulty, and to ignore it now, or to put it in abeyance, would be a position which they could not conscientiously take. He did not think that, in all the circumstances, it would be doing an injustice to themselves, or showing a discourtesy to their Free Church brethren, if they allowed this matter to lie over till another year ; and he could not see that that was tantamount to throwing any permanent obstacle in the way. He respected highly Professor Gibson—there was no man in Glasgow for whom he had a higher personal respect ; but it was quite clear that if his sentiments uttered in the Presbytery of Glasgow were adopted in the West, the Free Church would, along with the appointment of a committee, come forth with some declaration of their principles which would obstruct the union. He thought, therefore, that they ought to wait to see whether the Free Church would, at this crisis, put forth such a declaration of their principles as would be tantamount to an obstruction of union. They ought not to make any declaration themselves which might act as an obstruction, but simply wait to see if the Free Church meant to contend out and out for what they called that great and cardinal principle, that the civil magistrate has a duty to perform with regard to the recognition of truth, and with regard to its endowment. If the Free Church meant to stand by that principle, it would not be necessary to draw any inference—the obstacle would be put in their way—(hear, hear, and applause). They could not shut their eyes to what they saw in the press as coming forth from the leading men of the Free Church, and if at this crisis the Free Church was to give forth a declaration setting forth that they would not depart from that view as to the duty of the civil magistrates, then the union would not take place.

On that ground he would beseech Mr. Gunion not to throw any obstacle in the way. He did not think it would be right in them to say that they would make the Voluntary principle a bar to union, and he thought their true course was to wait and see whether the Free Church wished to raise any obstacle on account of their principle on that subject; and if they did not do so he should be most happy, and they would see their way clear to send a deputation to them unanimously.

The Rev. Dr. JOHNSTON, Limekilns, said—I rise to say that I cannot concur in the motion of Mr. Renton and Mr. Taylor. It was very right that the difficulties in the way of union with the Free Church should be clearly stated, but by appointing a committee we do no more than say that we wish these difficulties should be looked in the face, and that it should be ascertained whether there is any way in which they can be removed.

It has been assumed that in this Church the power and the duty of the civil magistrate in regard to religion has been made a term of communion. That is an entire mistake. There is no requirement from any of our preachers or ministers that they shall declare that the magistrate has no province and no power in regard to the Church, and that he errs and sins if he endow it; and there are members of this Church who hold materially the same sentiments on that topic with the members of the Free Church. Reference has also been made to an enactment passed again and again in this Church connected with the subject of education, that it is not within the province of the civil magistrate to provide religious instruction for the subject. If ten, twenty, thirty, or forty persons had intimated their dissent from that decision, no objection would have been taken to their having their dissent entered upon the minutes; and I believe there usually were persons who did dissent from that statement, if not in form, at least in reality. They were as free to hold and proclaim an opposite opinion on that subject, as those who were in favour of that resolution were to hold and record theirs. No one will suppose that I attach little importance to the principle I have now stated, or that I do not avail myself of the paragraph in our formula, that we do not accept of anything in the Westminster Confession of Faith that teaches, or is supposed to teach, *compulsory* or persecuting and intolerant principles in religion, to say that I firmly hold the principle to which I have now adverted, that it is not within the province of the civil magistrate to provide religious instruction for the subject. I hold that firmly, and will do so until arguments on the opposite side, which I have not yet seen, shall convince me to the contrary. I would not, however, ask the members of the Free Church to give up their principles on this matter; all that I ask is that that shall be an open question—(hear, hear). There is very great danger in this direction. There is the danger, I think, that an attempt will be made to contrive some general statement, under the cover of which, it may be, both parties may hold their opinion, but which will enable those who don't hold the principle for which I would contend, to say that they have never looked it in the face, and that they do not countenance any person who holds it. I may mention a case which took place in the Westminster Assembly, or rather an account which is given by Baillie in one of his letters, in which he says:—"We have agreed to insert a general statement, and by a benign exposition of it, it may be held that we have carried our views"—(laughter). Now that is just what I fear. I anticipate that there will be an attempt to construct some general proposition which, by a benign exposition (laughter), may permit us to hold our Voluntary opinions. Now to this I never can, and never will assent. It must be openly stated that this matter—the power and duty of the civil magistrate in regard to religion—is left entirely open.

There are, undoubtedly, several features of the present time that are very promising in the direction of union. For example, what has been effected

in the Colonies is very encouraging. It would be strange if the members of the two bodies should be able to come together in the Colonies, and yet that we should find it impossible to come together in the mother country. In Canada and Australia they have united, and in the Nova Scotian basis I think I see one on which the two Churches in this country might safely come together.

Another fact seems very favourable to union. About six years ago, 154 persons of the highest position and influence both in the Free Church and the United Presbyterian agreed upon certain general statements in favour of union. It is well known that the conduct of these persons awakened the greatest indignation, and that some of them were put, as it were, upon their defence, because they had ventured to issue a document of this kind ; but in the present day it is quite otherwise. You find movements, not in one direction, but in very many, towards union, and these not exclusively among persons of rank and influence in the denominations, but among all classes. Those movements towards union in the two branches of the Secession Church, which ultimately led to such important results, originated with Mr. Blyth, long a successful missionary, now an honoured minister in Glasgow, and one or two others, who were elders and members in the congregations of Mid-Calder and East Calder. I perceive something similar in the present movement, and it leads me to augur for it a similarly successful issue.

What has been the great cause of divisions in the Church? I answer, men's adding to the requirements which the Saviour has made for admission into the Church—(applause). It is very painful to be constrained to say that in all Churches the terms of communion are far from being commensurate with the terms of salvation, but greatly extended beyond them. The terms by which ministers and private Christians are admitted to the fellowship of the Church should be, as nearly as possible, those terms which are usually called terms of salvation. How strange that any should be excluded from the Church whom the Saviour has received ! What are the means by which union is to be promoted? I answer, that the best way of promoting this result is by getting rid of those excrescences, and by endeavouring to free ourselves of everything not required by the Master, when we are called to give any one admission into those Churches which he has founded—(cheers). I hold that there should be no attempt at compromise, but that we should come forward and openly state our opinions on any point on which we may seem to differ from one another ; and that the question should be honestly settled, "Can these matters be held to be open questions?—are they to be regarded as matters of forbearance?" Is it too much to require that matters of doubtful disputation, and that do not affect the vital principles of religion, should be left open questions, and that persons differing in opinion on such points should be received into the Church?

I would also make another statement, and it is this, that if, in looking abroad upon the state of our country and of the world, we had any reason to apprehend that a time might arrive when these questions should come to be practical questions ; in other words, could I have any apprehension that the time was near at hand when the State would tempt us and say, "Now, we are prepared to endow you upon your own conditions." I should have very great hesitation in entering into a union of this kind ; but I rejoice to think that the time has gone by for that—(applause). I hold that the time for endowing parties has passed away, and that the time for equality, and for the entire liberation of religion from State patronage and control seems to have set in.

There is another point to which I may advert. I do not concur in some of the statements made by Mr. Marshall. He and others seemed to speak as if there could be no other kind of union but that of an entire incorporation of the two bodies. Now, in a very striking book, written by Mr. Ballantyne of Stonehaven, and published at the commencement of the Voluntary

controversy, that gentleman propounds a theory to the effect that, if even the time should come when the whole Presbyterian body in Scotland were substantially united in sentiment and opinion, it would be their duty to divide into a number of separate organizations, recognising each other as Christian Churches, respecting each other's discipline, and in every way, without being incorporated, aiding each other in the great work of the Saviour. This is a theory that, I think, may well deserve to be considered. It might be a much more beautiful sight to see one great body, embracing not only the Presbyterians of Scotland, but also those of England, united into one British Presbyterian Church; but the question is not whether this would realize a beautiful theory or not, but whether this large body would be found best to promote the spirituality of the Church and the safety of the civil government; and there is room for very great doubt on that point. The Church, when very powerful, has often been found dangerous to the State, just as the State has been found to interfere unduly with the Church.

I am very willing that there should be a committee appointed by this Church to meet with any other committee that may be appointed by other Churches, but I do not think we should mention anything in our resolution about maintaining our principles, because that would seem to assume that we have some doubt as to whether the committee would do so or not. It should be understood that the committee has no power to go farther than to confer and to report to us—(hear, hear)—and surely it is never to be supposed that we are to peril our principles in a case like this—(applause). I dislike such an addition as the reference to our principles in any motion, because it seems to present us with a kind of bristling front, as if we did not think we were able to stand without some buttress of this kind.

I would the more willingly go into this proposal for union on this account, that if there are to be obstacles and difficulties in the matter, I should like that they did not come from our side. I have no desire to hasten such a union, but I would refrain from doing anything that would tend in the slightest degree to throw unnecessary obstacles in the way. I think it is our duty to cultivate friendly feelings with all the lovers of the Saviour, and that our great desire should be to have a basis of union between all the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. I admire the principle upon which the Free Church of France is constituted—they have a very short Confession of Faith. I cannot tell you how many propositions there are in the Westminster Confession of Faith, but Wodrow estimates them, I think, at no less than some thousands—(laughter). Now the Free Church of France has, as I have said, a very brief Confession, which they repeat at every meeting of their Synod, and every man in the Synod stands up and gives his assent and consent to it—(loud cheers). I think this a very great improvement upon our system. Their Confession may be too limited, but if that is the case I am certain that ours is too extended—(hear, hear, and cheers). I prefer another principle, observed in the Belgic Church, respecting the admission of members and ministers. When a man comes seeking admission into that Church, they ask, "Are there any parts of our Confession about which you feel difficulty?—because if there are, put them in writing, and state what it is that creates the difficulty in your mind, and we shall consider whether, feeling this difficulty, and dissenting from certain propositions in our Confession, we shall admit you as substantially accepting the Confession." In this way persons who cannot give their unlimited consent to the Belgic Confession of Faith are nevertheless received into their communion. Now, I prefer this system greatly to that which allows a man openly to avow his dissent from a catechism or confession to which he had formerly given his consent without asking any leave to dissent—(hear). There is scarcely a man in the Free Church or in our own Church that does not, upon some points, openly declare that he does not adhere to the Shorter Catechism. For example, in regard to the question of the creation of the world in six days, if you look into Dr.

Candlish's book on Genesis, you will find him openly saying that he does not believe that—(loud laughter)—and yet he has declared his assent and consent to that part of the Standards of his Church. I think it is far better that we should have an avowed principle to allow men differing from us on unimportant points to join the Church. With these observations I conclude by saying that I long exceedingly to see some step taken in the direction of union; but I should be quite satisfied if the two Churches were to respect each other's discipline, recognise each other as Christian Churches, and resolve to act together as far as possible. The Heavenly Jerusalem ought to be the model of the Church upon earth. That great city, we are told, has twelve gates, which are never shut, day or night. But it must be remembered that there are three to the north, and three to the south, and three to the east, and three to the west. I can conceive of troops of persons travelling from every opposite quarter and distant region arriving at last safely in that great city. So should it be with the Church on earth. Men may come from different quarters, apparently not marching together so much as they should, and yet they ought to be found recognising each other as forming one great Church of the living God—(loud cheers).

The Rev. GEORGE HUTTON, Paisley, after some preliminary remarks vindicating the propriety of full discussion, and expressive of his desire for union on sound principles, observed that there had been a good deal said about forbearance, but forbearance did not apply when the interests of truth were at stake. He thought they would not be doing justice to this question unless they said to Free Church friends, and unless they took it to themselves, that there must be a searching of heart in this matter—(applause). It was not enough for any one to say, This is an opinion which I hold, and if you wish union you must forbear. He thought they should go to the root of the matter and say, What right have you to make it a term of communion? He thought all parties should search and examine the principles which they believed to be at the foundation of their polity, and ascertain whether any of these formed a barrier to Scriptural union. One great hindrance to such union, he could not doubt, had been the incorporation into ecclesiastical standards of matters that were, to say the least, extra-scriptural. Such were opinions regarding various historical details more or less important, the interpretation of this statute and of that other, the validity of this protest, and the invalidity of that appeal. But was it necessary that Christian men should be of one mind to a nicety, to a shade, respecting the deeds of their fathers—respecting the terms of Burgess Oaths, National Covenants, Revolution Settlements, Treaties of Union, and Acts Rescissory? And was it lawful to impose, as terms of communion, opinions on technicalities which a man might be a good Christian and a sound Presbyterian, without so much as knowing or being able altogether to understand, and which probably not one in a hundred even of professional men had mastered? Any Church which would not involve itself in the guilt of schism must see to it that its terms of communion be disencumbered of such minutiae. If a scriptural principle is supposed to be involved in these details, by all means let that be extricated and expressed in few and simple words, and should it be deemed essential to the existence or welfare of the Church, let it be made a term of communion—but on no account the details themselves—(hear, hear). Now he held in his hand the volume containing the Standards of the Free Church, which, besides the well-known Confession and Catechisms of Presbyterianism, embraced various documents, the Claim of Rights, etc., that would be found reduplicating on innumerable Acts of Parliament and of Assembly, not to speak of decisions of the Civil Courts of the kingdom, documents apparently put forth as part of the testimony of that Church, and which all its members must homologate. Was it then the case that these must be received in their entirety in order to union? An eminent Professor

in the west seemed to say as much, while an eminent Principal in the east appeared to indicate that the Headship of Christ over all, and the spiritual independence of the Church, were alone to be regarded as distinctive of Free Churchism, and were in fact the concentrated essence of its documents. His hope was that this might prove to be the proper construction of the matter, and that these documents, which had served a noble transition purpose, and must ever retain a high place among the venerable memorials of the past, would be held as symbolic only in so far as they asserted the liberties of Christ's Church, and not, as they may be thought, to assert the liberties of any State Church, or of the Church of Scotland, or as they contained adjudications on the merits of decisions passed by the Civil tribunals. He was the more inclined to adopt this view of their character notwithstanding portions of their contents which seemed inconsistent with it, when he found that the formula of ordination only exacted approval of "the general principles embodied" in them "with respect to the spirituality and freedom of the Church of Christ, and her subjection to him as her only Head, and to his Word as her only standard;" and that the formula to be subscribed by all office-bearers was still more brief and general. It was, however, for the Free Church to make this point clear. How, then, did it stand with the United Presbyterian Church with regard to interpolations of historical matters in her terms of communion? He thought he might say that that Church had carefully excluded them from the Basis of 1847, and had aimed to express the scriptural principle involved in the contentings of fathers and founders in few and plain terms, which all might test by the Word of God. They had sought to put nothing into their documents which might bar union, and he believed they had nothing to put out. They had, indeed, asserted in their Basis principles which, with a less clear testimony in their behalf, the Free Church had put in practice, as, for example, those regarding the rights of the Christian people, male and female, in the election of office-bearers, and the duty of the Church to support and extend the ordinances of the gospel, laid down in Articles 7, 8, and 9. Could they eliminate or qualify any one of these? It was impossible. Union or no union, he believed that the principles therein contained would be held and cherished by all who belonged to the United Presbyterian Church, and he did not think that a Free Churchman could put his finger on one of the principles in the Basis that ought to be removed preliminary to union. Here he would take the opportunity of stating, that he could not agree with brethren who had said broadly that the Voluntary principle was not a term of communion in this Church. He began to be not quite sure what was meant by the Voluntary principle, and what by the principle of State-Churchism; but, if he understood the matter, it was only in a certain sense that the statement was true—in another sense it appeared to him the reverse of the truth; and he could not but regard it as unintentionally, but really, misleading in its effects. Certain propositions exhaustively defining Voluntaryism might not be engrossed in their Articles, but something very like that principle was both constructively and explicitly taught in them. This Church had from an early period, in its several branches, been finding its way to suitable expression on this point; and in its testimony so early as 1804, we find the General Associate Synod uttering no uncertain sound. "The endeavours," say these fathers, of the magistrate to do his duty to the Church, "must all be such as are consistent with the spirit of the gospel; not by the *interposition of the civil sword, but by his own advice and example.*" Further, with reference to his contributing for the spread of the gospel, they add, "while in this he is not disposing of the *nation's property lodged in his hand for other purposes*, but giving what is *his own*, he has a right to give it to whom he will." In the Basis of Union adopted by the United Associate Synod in 1820, the Westminster Confession is taken with the reservation, "It being always understood, however, that *we do not approve or require an approbation of anything in these books, or in*

any other which teaches or may be thought to teach compulsory or persecuting and intolerant principles in matters of religion." The modification by the Relief Synod was, "Except where said Confession recognises the power of the civil magistrate in religious concerns." The ordination formula of the United Church contains the significant though infelicitous clause, "It being always understood that you are *not required* to approve," etc., which ought to be conformed to the terms of the second article in the Basis of 1847, which in this only gives a simpler version of that of 1820, "It being always understood that *we do not approve* of anything in these documents which teaches . . . compulsory . . . principles in religion." Now, these last are the terms of the Basis on which the United Presbyterian Church stands, which can neither be denied nor explained away. Here, on the one hand, *compulsion* in religion is condemned; and on the other hand, in Article 9 of same document, voluntary liberality is declared to be the law of Christ for the support of His ordinances. Taking these things separately, or putting them together, we have something which, whether it be called Voluntaryism or what else, would be sufficient, if held by the Church, to preclude a civil establishment of religion having any place in the land—(applause).

Having made these *attainments*, therefore, the United Presbyterian Church must hold them fast, and beware of sacrificing them to generalities for the sake even of union. They must be careful not to misrepresent their principles, but to speak frankly while they spoke kindly—(hear, hear). They must not lead it to be supposed that a Churchman could find scope for his convictions in their fellowship. Would any of their ministers or congregations be tolerated for a moment in receiving endowments from the State, or in negotiating for such? Or would any member of their churches be held as entitled to privileges who repudiated the obligation to support the gospel? What then, it may be asked, is the amount of truth in the statement that Voluntaryism is not a term of communion? Simply this, he apprehended, that the United Presbyterian Church does not shut its door on any whose theoretical views of the magistrate's province may not be logically squared to his practice, or to other parts of his creed, so long as he acknowledges the duty of the Church to support and extend the gospel, and to reject compulsory appliances in religion, and, along with this, maintains a position of practical dissent from the Established Church. He had made these remarks under a sense of duty. He would have preferred to speak on the importance of cultivating special intercourse in their several localities with the Churches referred to in the overtures, but he had spoken as he had done all the more freely, that he was well known in the scene of his ministry to be a friend to this union—(cheers). He was in favour of all intermediate measures by which they might more smoothly, easily, and quickly arrive at this end; but they never could arrive at it without relieving their breasts of all this perilous stuff, and making it quite clear where they were and how they stood—(applause).

Professor HARPER, who was received with loud cheers, said—I have only to express the pleasure I feel in having an opportunity of saying how delighted I am that this subject has been brought under the consideration of the Synod. I have heard the discussion with unmingled satisfaction, and with great admiration of the pre-eminent talent which has been displayed; and I am still more delighted with the unanimity of the speakers, almost unparalleled in any discussion in this Synod upon such an important question. I am delighted to witness the kindly feeling and sentiment of brotherhood which has been manifested and expressed by all the speakers. It would not have surprised me, although in reference to the local irritations referred to, some speakers had given their language a tincture of asperity towards the Free Church, but there was nothing of the kind. My honoured brother, Mr. Renton, with characteristic manliness and honesty, expressed his sentiments with unreserved freedom, but I do not think there was anything that fell from his

lips that can give serious offence. On the subject of school grants, for instance, I believe I have heard about as strong language from Free Church brethren themselves. I do not know that sensitiveness is a Free Church property—(laughter)—but though there were a little of it, I do not think there was anything in what fell from Mr. Renton to-day that any one could find fault with. The discussion, I am sure, was on the whole eminently creditable, not only to the talent, but to the Christian spirit and feeling that pervade this Synod—(hear, hear). There is one thing in which I agree with my brother Mr. Hutton, that there is a point of difference we must look at. Dr. William Johnston referred to this in a former part of the day, and also pointed out the ground we should occupy, and the steps we should take in relation to this point of difference. I have long held, and on various occasions publicly expressed my feelings, amounting almost to anxiety, on this particular point. I refer not to practical differences, but to one point on which there is a doctrinal difference between us, namely, the question relative to the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion—(hear, hear). It may appear to some that there is no cause for apprehension in reference to this subject. There may be no need for apprehension, but there is need to be careful that there be no ambiguity in the expression of our sentiments. We should distinctly define what our view on this subject is, and we should know from our Free Church brethren what is theirs; and having made the point of difference stand out clearly and prominently, we shall then know what is to be made a matter of forbearance between us—(cheers). I say there is need for this, because there is a danger, not of any unfair play on either side, but of attempting some form of words so skilfully contrived as apparently to reduce the difference to a shadowy nothing; the result of which would be, that whenever a question occurred in reference to this particular subject, a collision of opinion would ensue; so that it is much better to know at the outset the ground on which we stand—(cheers). I see in the phraseology adopted in two, at least, of the overtures, occasion for the remarks which Mr. Hutton has made, in which I now follow his example. In the overture from Broughton Place Session, language occurs to this effect, that we agree with the Free Church as to the headship of Christ over nations, which, in the most important sense, is no more than true. But if the question were put, "What do you, as a Free Churchman, understand to be included in that?" and we were asked what we, as holders of the Voluntary principle, understand to be included in it, a difference would immediately appear—(cheers). I can very well conceive that a Free Churchman might say he understood the headship of Christ over nations to include the appointment of kings and queens to be nursing fathers and mothers to the Church in the matter of endowment—(cheers). I say, as a Voluntary, that Christ as Head of the Church, prescribes her maintenance and extension by resources of her own. Then, in the overture of Dr. George Johnston, there is a sort of alternative stated—that the point of difference may either be adjusted, or made matter of forbearance. I hold no alternative of that kind—(cheers). A point of difference may be adjusted, by seeking to bring the other party over to our views, or by some general phraseology in which both for the time may concur. The former way of adjusting it is not to be expected; the latter way of adjustment is not to be wished—(cheers). I was delighted to hear from Dr. Taylor how happily the Canadian union works among the churches there. Dr. Taylor ascribed that success to the well-defined limits within which forbearance is exercised: on the one hand, there is the acknowledgment of Christ's headship over the nations; and on the other hand, there is the acknowledgment that assent to the 23d chapter of the Confession is not to be understood as implying an acknowledgment of a compulsory and persecuting power in matters of religion. I am glad to think the union works as it does; and yet I could wish in our case something still more precise than this Canadian basis, for I think its language is hardly explicit enough, just in the way that I think

Dr. Johnston's overture is somewhat general. As to the Australian basis, the expressions qualifying assent to the 23d chapter of the Confession are nearly the same as our own; but what was said of such qualification by that noble-minded, thoroughly honest, catholic-hearted man, Principal Cunningham—(loud cheers)—in commenting on the union of the Australian churches?—"He believed then, and he was still satisfied, that the qualification of simply taking the 23d chapter with the explanation that they did not adopt anything that taught or might be supposed to teach intolerant principles, was not wide enough to admit a Voluntary. He could not see how any Voluntary could adopt the 23d chapter of the Confession of Faith with so scanty and meagre an explanation." What shall we say to that? If the explanation which we have considered as securing a wide enough door for the admission of a Voluntary is not adequate for that purpose in the view of a Free Churchman, we must be careful what we are about. He, Dr. Cunningham, added that he was "also farther impressed with the conviction that, if men who professed Voluntary views could honestly and intelligently subscribe the Confession of Faith with so meagre an explanation, there was a strong presumption that, if men rightly understood one another, there was not so radical and fundamental a difference between them and some of the more reasonable Voluntaries as had been imagined." I say, therefore, it is necessary that we should distinctly understand the point of difference, and, in proposing union, see that it shall be held as matter of forbearance, and that as such it shall never hereafter be called in question—(cheers). Now, if I have spoken strongly on that subject, is it because I am not a friend to this measure? Quite the reverse. With all my heart I delight in the prospect of union with the Free Church—(hear, hear, and applause). I agree to the utmost with all the sentiments in the noble address of Dr. Cairns, and in all that Dr. Thomson has said in honouring the Free Church for the liberality and zeal which has characterized that body from the beginning, and for the example they have given to us, and to other denominations, of a spirit of perseverance and enterprise in promoting the work of the Lord; so that I hail the prospect with the greatest delight and satisfaction. All I say is, let us mutually understand our position, so that, if the union be accomplished, no uncertainty or uneasiness may occur hereafter. I am sure it is creditable to this Church to take this step in advance. Had there been no signs of the times indicating that it was seasonable, and calling on us to move, I would have been for pausing, for this reason, that the members of the Free Church know quite well that, as we do not make the Voluntary principle a term of ministerial or Christian communion, we have nothing to give up, and therefore I think it would have been fitting for them to take the first step in advance. However, I would not stand on a punctilio. Although the Free Church as a body has not taken a step in advance, we know very well that there are overtures coming up from Free Church Presbyteries to the Assembly, and we have overtures on our table. Therefore it would be to stand aloof in a narrow spirit of mere punctilio to say that we should wait until the Free Church set us the example by taking the initiative. I am glad we have taken this step; it coincides with our character as a Church whose name and history speak so much of union. I rejoice in the movement, and I think the authors of these overtures are not only to be commended, but also to be envied for having shown themselves to be men of understanding, discerning the signs of the times, and giving us an opportunity of considering the subject in circumstances so favourable. I trust we shall go on from one step to another until the union is consummated. Let us anticipate the result. If the Free Church and ourselves were one body, what might we not do in holding up the banner of Christian unity in confutation of the Romish charge against our common Protestantism that it is a religion of schisms and sectaries? I have no sympathy with the feeling that has been expressed as to the injurious influence of this union on civil and religious liberty. Those

who look on it with a political and secular eye may no doubt fear that so powerful an ecclesiastical body would domineer in the State; but what risk can there be of that when we proceed on purely spiritual grounds, and have nothing to do with political matters save to keep up a protest in behalf of spiritual privilege and spiritual liberty? Such apprehensions I would hold to be akin to the notion that there is a great advantage in maintaining divisions in the Christian Church, because if a man is injured in one section he can flee to another—(cheers). But in a Church, the life of which consists in maintaining the rights of conscience and religious liberty, how visionary are such apprehensions as these! Let us give them to the winds, and in utter disregard of them, calmly and steadily press forward this movement, which, if we can only carry it to a consummation, will give us an opportunity of showing with what success we, as a united sacramental host, may go up to possess the land—(loud cheers).

The Rev. Dr. BRYCE, Belfast, said there was nothing he desired so much as the contemplated unions, and he would support that motion which appeared to him best fitted to bring them about in the shortest time, and in the most satisfactory manner. The maxim that the way to do a great deal in a short time was to do one thing at a time, had been quoted in this debate with deserved approval, though it had been very erroneously called "vulgar," for it was the maxim of one of the greatest characters in history, Sully; and it appeared to him that the motion of Mr. Renton, rightly understood, was the only motion which proceeded on that principle. The first step was to express a willingness for the proposed unions; the second to appoint a committee. He thought it better not to try to take these two steps at one bound. Good and wise men, if called suddenly to give their opinions, might commit themselves knee-deep against the proposal, who, had they a year to reflect, would be in its favour. He thought also that the proposal for union should come from some of the other bodies; and he said not so as a matter of punctilio, but out of respect to them; not that he would stand up proudly and say, "Let them ask union," but that coming from us it would look like asking them to surrender some of their principles. His esteemed brother Dr. Johnston had said that there ought to be no terms of communion but the terms of salvation. That was a very pretty antithesis or parallelism; but was there nothing due to the honour of our Lord Jesus Christ? That ought to be the main foundation of their Voluntaryism. The arguments against the compulsory support of religion, because it was unjust to our fellow-men, because it chilled Christian liberality, and other such, had some weight; but that which clinched the whole matter was, that State support to Christianity was dishonouring to Christ; every Christian ought to put it away from him, exclaiming, "I will not affront my Saviour by wringing from the reluctant hands of his enemies the means of supporting his gospel." Holding, therefore, that there ought to be full time given for the consideration of the matter, he would vote for Mr. Renton's motion.

The Rev. Dr. GEORGE JOHNSTON said—I wish to explain, with reference to that part of the overture which came from me on which Dr. Harper has made remarks, that when I used the phrase "adjust the points of difference between the two Churches," I meant that we should distinctly understand on both sides what these points of difference were, and unite with a distinct comprehension of what it was that constituted the difference between the two Churches; and thus having adjusted them, make them a matter of forbearance.

The Rev. HENRY CALDERWOOD, Glasgow, in seconding Mr. Gunion's motion, said—It must be thoroughly understood that, while we should honestly and heartily enter upon arrangements for union, this is expressly affirmed, that we are not prepared to enter on any union unless on the condition that our Voluntaryism be kept intact, while the principle itself is not made a term of communion. Unless we give expression to this now, we may find when the question returns from the Committee, that several of us will be placed in such

a position that we may unhappily be forced to oppose what may have been done. It is quite fair that we should find the Free Church making just at this moment a resolution to hold up most clearly its own principles, and it is quite consistent with a desire for union that Dr. Candlish should have delivered his speech the other day on the principles of the Church; and it is equally consistent that we as a Church shall in like manner, and at the same time, proceed to a new exposition of our principles, and hold up those principles distinctly before the members of our churches, while we are most honestly and earnestly labouring for the union of the two denominations—(applause). On these accounts I think it desirable that we should have some motion which should lay down not only our desire for union, or wish that there may be preliminary arrangements, but, at the very outset, declare that there can be no ultimate union except on the ground of keeping our Voluntaryism clear—(applause).

The Rev. Dr. ROBSON, Glasgow.—I must express the great joy which I have felt during the whole of this discussion, and the gratitude which has filled my heart. I am a warm friend of union with the Free Church, and the other bodies mentioned in these Overtures; and I think the debate would not have had the moral weight which it will carry along with it if there had not been that free utterance of sentiment (hear, hear) which has characterized it throughout. I dare say we all felt when we came to those points which we must take up and look in the face, that perhaps there was a little recession in the wave of feeling that had been previously raised; but I am firmly persuaded of this, that the bringing out of the points of difference between us, and which have been more fully gone into in the subsequent parts of the discussion, is only preparatory to the rising still higher of that tide of Christian feeling—of Christian brotherhood—of Christian love—which I believe is flowing in all our hearts. I am firmly persuaded that all who have spoken in a way that does not look at first sight so friendly to union—and I know it in the case of some with whom I am intimately connected—have as strong a desire for union as exists in the breast of any one who has addressed the Court to-day—(hear, hear, and applause). While I feel there is a great deal of force in what has been said by my friend and brother who has preceded me, and by Dr. Bryce, who always speaks so clearly and logically, yet I do think the first motion which has been proposed (Dr. King's) is the motion which, as a Church, we ought to adopt—(applause). I say so in the full belief that those who have made and those who support the other motions are as warm friends of union as those who shall support this motion. It is a mere question of difference in judgment, or in opinion, as to the best mode of attaining the object which all desire. Now, it strikes me that in the mere appointment of a committee in reference to this subject, we do not commit ourselves as a Church at all. That committee are not going to give up any principle of our Church; and are not those principles already so well defined that we may safely intrust such a committee as will be appointed by this House with their maintenance? How, then, could any resolution such as that which Mr. Gunion has submitted render our principles more clear? The committee that this first motion calls you to appoint as a committee of this House are to meet with any committee that shall be appointed by the other Churches; and they go into conference with these other committees not to settle anything, not to resolve on anything, but to confer with them, and to give and take explanations. Then they come back and report to this Synod; and not a single thing can be done before this Synod is consulted; and not a single thing can be done even by this Synod until the proposals shall be sent down to Presbyteries and Sessions. I prefer this motion of Dr. King on this other ground. We all know that the subject is to be brought up in the Free Church Assembly; and if we do not take any step—if we simply let the Overtures lie on the table, do you suppose that that Assembly will feel encouraged to appoint a committee on their part? I ask, would

they not rather feel hampered by the fact that we had declined meanwhile to move in the matter. Then if, notwithstanding our adoption of Dr. King's motion, they should not appoint a committee, I feel as if it would be an honour to our Church that we thus show our readiness to enter into conference with our brethren on the subject of union—(loud applause). Instead of feeling that my principles were compromised, or that I had done anything for which I should be ashamed, I would feel it rather a glory to our Church that she had placed herself in this position ; and, I believe, we would stand higher in the Christian opinion of this country (applause) if such a committee were appointed by us now, than if we were to delay it for twelve months—(renewed applause). I do trust the result of this day's discussion will be a powerful contribution towards the cause of Christian union in Scotland ; and although I hold with my friend Dr. W. Johnston, who addressed us so well in the former part of the day, that Christian Churches existing together, going on harmoniously, recognising each other as brethren, may accomplish a great deal of good ; still I hold that in the present case the union of these Churches would accomplish more for the advancement of the cause, and kingdom, and honour of Him who is the Church's Head. We are remaining apart on grounds which appear to me not sufficient to keep us apart, and which I believe, when they come to be looked at—as they will be looked at by Christian men in conference—will either disappear or assume such small dimensions as will enable us, without giving up one of our principles, to step over the boundary-line, shake hands, and cordially embrace each other as Christian brethren, rejoicing together that we are no longer divided but one—(loud applause).

Dr. EDMOND, London—In the course of this discussion there has been most naturally a prominence given to union with one denomination, which has thrown a little into the shade union with other denominations, in one of which at least I have a special interest—(hear, hear). I think if I ever doubted that union with other non-endowed denominations in Britain was sure some day to come, I should, after the discussion to-day, doubt it no more ; for it is very evident to every one who has listened to this debate, that the question of union, so far as the principle is concerned, is one on which there is entire unanimity among the members of this Court. There is, and there most properly and honourably is, a strong feeling in the minds of all—it comes out more strongly, perhaps, in the expressions of some than of others, but it is in all our breasts—that in any union we may form with any other denomination we shall not forego, in the slightest degree, any of those grand principles that I rejoice to say have permeated this Church, and been held forth by it throughout its past history. In that we are thoroughly united ; and we rejoice—we all rejoice that there are amongst us those who give honest, intelligent utterance of that feeling that pervades all our breasts ; but, as far as the dutifulness of union, provided it can be accomplished honourably to all parties—so far as the principle is concerned, I cannot doubt now that this Synod is entirely at one, and that, so far as the result depends on our unanimity, the union under consideration will some day be accomplished. Most justly has it been said again and again to-day, in the able addresses to which we have listened, that this denomination has been distinguished by nothing more honourably than by its succession of unions, and we should be false to our historic characteristics if we were not—I shall not say simply unreluctant, but forward to enter into it, and the first to hold out the right hand of brotherhood—(applause). In former unions, however, we have not been called on to consider the possibility of two Christian denominations that have a distinct point of difference between them coming together, and while differing, and making very precise and intelligible that point of difference, yet working in perfect unity. I do not know that there is at the present moment any principle or fragment of a principle that you could say had

been made a matter of forbearance between the Relief and United Secession Churches, nor between the Burgher and Anti-Burgher sections of the United Secession Church ; but do I feel the less interested in the union now contemplated because a new element must enter into our negotiations ? Sir, it will be one of the grandest things the world has ever seen, if two or more alike intelligent and conscientious bodies shall come together saying—In so many things are we agreed, in all essentials we are so agreed, that this one point, which we freely project into unmistakable visibility, shall yet be a matter of entire forbearance between us. Oh, what a plume would be on the crest of charity when two denominations should so unite !—(applause). I have said that the great question of union with the Free Church has naturally, in this discussion, thrown into the shade the question of union with other bodies ; and I rejoice in the fact on this account, that whatever may be our views as to the superior practicability of some other unions of a lesser rank, there can be no question, I think, that the first presents the grandest conception of union that you can now propose in Britain. Moreover, it is very plain that if union with the Free Church should be accomplished, if the Free and United Presbyterian Churches in Scotland—I say in Scotland, because the former denomination belongs to that land—should take place, that grand union would draw others in its wake. I rejoice, therefore, that that has been a prominent feature in the discussion of the day, and all the more because I wish to strike for that highest mark. I do not say that I shall refuse lower, lesser unions ; but I shall not accept a lesser union until I see that the higher and grander is too remote at least for me to aim at (applause) ; and therefore in regard to the union with the Synod of the English Presbyterian Church, I wish to make an observation. Union, even at the cost of severance between the churches of the U.P. denomination to the south of the Tweed, and the churches of that body to the north of the Tweed—union even at that expense, I will not deny, may some day seem to me to be an imperative duty, but I shall not regard it as such until I be convinced that union without severance is an impossibility—(applause). But is it an impossibility ? There was a time when, with Mr. Towers, I would have said so ; but I then looked at the matter in what I now regard an unfair light. If this Church should propose to treat with the English Presbyterian Church upon the basis that our friends in the minor body as to numbers shall become United Presbyterians, I should not hesitate to say that their just spirit of attachment to their denomination would lead those excellent brethren to say—We cannot so treat with you. They would say,—“ We are willing to be united, but we are not willing to be absorbed.” But I am not sure that they will be indisposed to treat with us if we can say, You are an independent Presbyterian Church, and so are we ; let us treat as such, and if we find that we can unite, let us bid honourable farewell to our present denominational designations, and let us emblazon on our flag some new name, and let us then show our front to the world and to the Churches around us as two independent Churches, not the one absorbing the other, but joining to form a body, identified with, and yet somewhat different from both. If any objection should be raised to this proposal—and one objection, which I feel deserves very great consideration, has been stated in the South, viz., that to act on the Southern field you must have some English centre of operation—the decision of granting an English Synod this week, I venture to hope, has paved the way for the removal of the difficulty—(hear, hear, and applause). I shall only add that I heard to-day from one whose judgment on any question is worthy to be deferred to, and whose sagacious views on all matters it is ever a delight to hear—I refer to Dr. William Johnston—(loud applause)—I say I heard from him, although he was only quoting from another, but quoting with some degree of concurrence, the expression of apprehension lest so vast a body as the Free Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the United Presbyterian Church, the English

Presbyterian Church, and add, if you like—and I rejoice to think of including it—the Welsh Calvinistic Presbyterian Church—lest so great a body as these denominations united would form should be perilous to the civil and religious liberties of the country. Now, some couple of centuries ago the argument would have been most truthful and irresistible ; but in these days, when we have learned, through the teaching of experience and the diffusion of a missionary spirit, two lessons that our forefathers had not so clearly apprehended, the danger is, I think, visionary. We have now been taught, as our forefathers were not taught, to separate the secular from the spiritual, to hem in the Church—not a circumscription but an enlargement, after all—into her own spiritual domain ; and I distinctly feel that if you can keep the Church within that spiritual domain it is a sheer impossibility that she can harm the civil interests of the empire. Again we have been taught, as our forefathers were not taught, that the grand work of the Christian Church is to go out to all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, and you cannot make a body so large that its spiritual life shall be endangered by its bulk and extent, so long as there is in the heart of that body a principle that seeks still to enlarge itself, striking out to the right hand and the left to conquer the world for Christ. Let a church be stagnant, and I grant you it will corrupt, and corrupt with rapidity proportioned to its size ; but let it be active and missionary, and whether it be small or large, its very activity shall preserve its spiritual life—(applause). After some further observations, Dr. Edmond concluded a most eloquently delivered address by suggesting—Would it not be a befitting thing, if this evening we take any step—I do not care whether it shall be the lesser or the larger step—towards that great consummation—if having resolved on it, we should launch the bark of this committee, or of this first resolution, amidst the breathings of united prayer,—if we should, having formed our resolution, gather ourselves for a little into a solemn devotional meeting, and plead with Him that is pleading now with His Father that “they all may be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”—(hear, hear). The reverend gentleman then resumed his seat amid prolonged applause.

The vote was then taken, when the following was the result :—

For Dr. King's motion,		178
„ Mr. Renton's do.,		14
„ Mr. Gunion's do.,		3

Dr. King's motion was declared carried amid loud applause ; and in accordance with Dr. Edmond's suggestion, an impressive prayer was then offered up by Dr. Cairns.

Christian Union.

REPORT OF SPEECHES

ON

UNION WITH THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DELIVERED IN

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH,

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 1863.

Revised Edition.

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UNION WITH THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

THE Assembly took up the letter from the Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church, and relative overtures, anent union.

Dr BUCHANAN read the letter as follows :—

“ TO THE VERY REVEREND THE MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

“ OFFICES OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, QUEEN STREET,
EDINBURGH, 23d May 1863.

“ REV. SIR,—I have the honour to inform you, that on Friday, 15th May current, the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, moved by various overtures representing the desirableness of union among the unendowed Presbyterian bodies of this country, adopted a resolution, of which a copy is herewith enclosed, appointing a committee of their number to meet with any committee that may be appointed by the General Assembly of the Free Church, for the purpose of conferring with them as to the relative positions of the two Churches, and the steps that might be deemed proper for promoting present co-operation and ultimate union between them. The Rev. Dr Harper, Leith, was nominated Convener of the Synod's committee; and, should it seem good to the General Assembly to appoint a similar committee, it will be convenient that any communication they may have to make on the subject be addressed to him. It gives me great pleasure, Moderator, to state that the resolution referred to was adopted with almost entire unanimity on the part of the Synod—178 votes having been tendered in its support, while no more than 17 votes were given in favour of two amendments, neither of which was opposed to union, their supporters desiring only that the object should be attained in a somewhat different way. The cordiality and devout earnestness with which the Synod passed their resolution is indicated in their minute; and the day will long be remembered by the brethren present as a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Praying that He whose name is Counsellor may bless the deliberations of your venerable Assembly in this and in all other matters, and may guide His faithful people everywhere into those measures by which His Jerusalem is to be builded as a city that is compact together.—I have the honour to be, Rev. Sir, respectfully yours,

“ WILLIAM BECKETT, *Synod Clerk.*”

Dr Buchanan also read the minute of the Synod containing the resolution appointing the Committee on Union with the Free Church, which is as follows :—

“ SYNOD HALL, QUEEN STREET, EDINBURGH,
15th May 1863.

“ The Synod of the United Presbyterian Church met, and was constituted by the Moderator.

“ *Inter alia*, transmitted and read overture by the Presbytery of Berwick anent union with the Free Church of Scotland, the English Presbyterian Church, the

Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Church of the Original Secession, with overture by the Presbytery of Lancashire on the same subject; also, overture by the Session of Broughton Place, Edinburgh, and by Dr George Johnston, in favour of union with the Free Church.

“The Presbytery of Berwick, the Presbytery of Lancashire, and the Session of Broughton Place were heard in support of their respective overtures. The other overture, Dr Johnston, was not present; but a communication from him, addressed to the clerk, was read by permission of Synod, explaining the cause of his absence, and expressing his mind on the subject of his overture.

“After lengthened reasoning, the Synod resolved that a committee be appointed to consider the subject of union with other Presbyterian bodies in all its bearings, and, more immediately, to meet with any committees that may be appointed by the General Assembly of the Free Church, or by the Synod of the English Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, or the Original Secession Church, and to confer with them respecting the relative position of these several bodies and the United Presbyterian Church, and the steps proper to be taken for their present co-operation and ultimate union.

“In connexion with the resolutions thus come to, Dr Cairns, at the request of the Synod, led their devotions in thanksgiving and prayer at the throne of grace.

“Extracted from the minutes of Synod, this 23d day of May 1863, by

(Signed)

“WILLIAM BECKETT, *Synod Clerk.*”

Dr BUCHANAN then said—I look upon the question which these overtures have brought before the Assembly as the most important—(applause)—with which we have had to deal since the great event of the Disruption itself. It is a question which cannot have taken any of us by surprise. It has been coming across our minds, every now and then, ever since we were called to take up our present position as a dis-established Church. From the very first it was manifest, to all thoughtful men, that two such bodies as the United Presbyterians and ourselves could not long resist the necessity of carefully considering the relation in which we were to stand to one another. Had there been points of difference between us, as numerous and as strongly marked as those, for instance, which separate the Congregationalists and the Wesleyans of England—points both of doctrine and of ecclesiastical government—there might have been no reason whatever why we should not have gone on indefinitely as we are, without raising any question of union at all. But the case being so that with us the matters of difference are so few, and those in which we are at one, so many—it being the broad and conspicuous fact, that in doctrine and worship, in discipline and government, we are essentially agreed—that we adhere to the same standards and to the same ecclesiastical polity—that we boast of the same ecclesiastical pedigree—that we look back with equal pride to the same ecclesiastical history, and cherish with equal fondness, as our common inheritance, the memory of the men whose mighty deeds that history records—the case, I say, being so, it was obviously inevitable that the question must sooner or later arise, whether it were not right and fitting—whether, in a word, it were not the will of God, that we twain should become one. (Applause.) The question has arisen. After being long canvassed in private circles, and recently in more public places and forms, it has at length found its way into Church courts, and reached the floor of this General Assembly; where, I am sure, it will receive a not less earnest, candid, and friendly consideration than that which it has already met with in the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church. (Applause.) In venturing shortly to address the House on this momentous subject, I shall advert first to some of those reasons which appear to me to render it eminently desirable that the union contemplated should take place, if we can see our way consistently, harmoniously, and with a good conscience, to go into it. In speaking on this point, I shall not take up the time of the Assembly by going into those general considerations, respecting union, about which there is, and can be, no difference of opinion. We are all agreed that divisions among God’s people are a source of great weakness, and that union, when constituted on right principles, is a source of great strength. We are all agreed that the whole teaching, of our Lord and His apostles, is condemnatory

of everything like needless splits and separations in the Christian Church. It was the prayer of the Church's Head, as recorded in the chapter read this morning at the opening of the Assembly, that His people might be one, as He and the Father are one. The unity, no doubt, which is pointed at in that memorable prayer is a unity in truth and love; and these are elements which a mere formal external union does by no means necessarily secure. At the same time, where there is substantial unity of mind and heart on the great verities of the Christian faith, and on the great principles of church order and administration, both reason and Scripture evidently point to ecclesiastical fellowship—to an incorporating union—as by far the best and completest expression of that unity, and as the form in which it is far likeliest to tell effectively on the progress of Christ's cause in the world. (Applause.) But instead of viewing the case in a merely general and abstract form, it may be more useful, on such an occasion as the present, rather to look at it in that practical shape in which it actually comes before us. Here we are—two separate Churches—both of us essentially Scottish,—both of us decidedly Calvinistic in doctrine, and decidedly Presbyterian in government,—both of us zealous upholders of spiritual independence and non-intrusion,—upholders, that is, of the crown rights of Christ as Zion's only King and Lord, and of the blood-bought liberties of His people,—both of us unconnected with the State, and exclusively dependent for the temporal support of our missions and of our ministry on the voluntary offerings of our people,—and finally, both of us all the while occupying the same territory, and rubbing shoulders on the same soil in almost every town and village of our common country, while doing the very same work. Now, in circumstances like these, it is obviously all but inevitable that great inconveniences and misunderstandings must, in the long run, be produced. We cannot fail to come in each other's way. In some cases poor and spiritually-destitute localities will be neglected, because neither Church may have, by itself alone, the means of overtaking them. While in other cases the spirit of denominational rivalry, or even the legitimate and honourable desire of each Church to supply the religious wants of its own adherents, may lead to the planting, in many a small village or limited rural population, of two churches and two ministers, where in reality there is room for only one. (Hear, hear.) The waste of money and of men resulting from such a state of things were evil enough, even if that were all. But that is not all. A far worse consequence will be found in those miserable jealousies, and heartburnings, and alienations of feeling, which are sure to spring up between ministers and congregations so unfortunately situated. Where two such congregations are both struggling for existence, and where each, by every success it gains, is aggravating the difficulties of the other, what reasonable hope can there be for either ministers or people of dwelling together in unity? It were hard to tell how many a worthy minister's life has in this way been embittered and practically thrown away, and what loss and damage has been sustained by religion itself. (Hear, hear.) It seems to me, therefore, obvious and undeniable, that not only would the cause of Christian charity and Christian brotherhood gain much by our union, but that we should be thereby enabled, by God's blessing, to turn to far better account our means and resources for carrying the gospel all over the length and breadth of the land. (Applause.)

These are important considerations in favour of union, but there are others not less important behind. The times in which we live are eventful times, especially as concerns the truth of God and the Church of Christ. Almost everywhere there are influences extensively at work, unsettling men's minds on all the most vital doctrines of the gospel, and even on the Divine authority and inspiration of the Bible itself. Multitudes are drifting away, they know not whither, from the old faith that was once delivered to the saints; and there are Churches, only too well known, which, instead of appearing valiantly in its defence, even when it is openly assailed within their own communion, are either so largely infected with the same latitudinarian spirit as to be unwilling, or so utterly overlaid by the civil power as to be altogether unable, to move a finger against those by whom this evil is done. Such a state of things addresses a loud and urgent call to the friends of a pure gospel to draw together, and to place themselves on a vantage-ground for display-

the general feeling in the English Presbyterian Church, there is rather a wish to maintain an English nationality, and to stand forth before the English people as an indigenous institution. However this may prove, I think that the English Presbyterians have the clearest right to be represented in any committee that may ever come to be appointed on the question of incorporating union, not only because it may turn out that they are quite as willing to unite with us as any of the sister Churches, but because the close relations which have always subsisted between them and the Free Church, would make it unfair to decide our own future relation to the Free Church in their absence. I do hope that whatever motion may be made for negotiations or intercommunications will include this sister Church in England; and that there will be a virtual union arrived at of all unendowed Presbyterians in Great Britain, even if, for the sake of convenience, there afterwards arises a new distribution of forces. Into this ulterior question, so grave, and in some respects so new and untried, I think it better not to enter until it can be ascertained whether union in any shape is really practicable. I have, Moderator, as I have said elsewhere, strong convictions and also strong hopes on this head, and I shall only further glance at some of the difficulties. There are two kinds of difficulties in the way—accidental and essential—the one class arising out of causes that do not at all make a necessary and constant obstacle, and the other class arising out of causes which do. To the first head of accidental difficulties, I refer the short time the subject has been seriously under discussion, the want of cordiality in some quarters between the representatives of different Churches, the occasional quarrels and misunderstandings that may have arisen or may still subsist, the strong love of things as they are, just because they are, and have been found to work well. These, I say, are mere accidents, and I do hope that no one will rest much upon them, because they may change any day, and, without the slightest change in anything else, make the very parties that may now hesitate eager for incorporation. I hope nobody will be offended if I refer to this same class of accidental difficulties, supposed differences in regard to Christian doctrine. These, I humbly think, are mere accidental misunderstandings, and will, I trust, give place before fuller and more careful inquiry. I am not aware of anybody in the United Presbyterian Synod that objects to the doctrines of the Free Church or of any other Church named in this overture. We give them full credit for holding sincerely to the Westminster Standards; and though they do not all agree among themselves on points left open by those Standards, we are perfectly satisfied to meet them on the common ground, and to allow them their liberty. In some quarters, however—I do not think numerous, and as I hope and pray, not incurably—there is a disposition to charge us, or at least some of us, with departing from Westminster Calvinism. I am thoroughly persuaded that this is pure misunderstanding—(applause). If these brethren had gone through all the discussions and mutual explanations of the atonement controversy, and especially if they had experienced, as we have done since, the atmosphere of delightful and unbroken doctrinal harmony which has succeeded, they would never dream of any discord being among us, either with one another or with the Westminster Standards; and they would dismiss this obstacle as a mere accident—an accident, I hope, of a transient and temporary influence—which will soon vanish before inquiry, before truth and charity. There are, however, real and not inconsiderable difficulties, which are involved in the very nature of the movement, and which require more than mere kindly feeling and accurate knowledge of facts to overcome. The first and chief of these is the undeniable difference which generally prevails in regard to the power of the civil magistrate. Here, undoubtedly, however our formularies may approach or even coincide (and I am disposed to go further than some in asserting their approximation), we are not, in point of general belief, at one. There are views held in the Churches with which we seek to unite, with which most or probably all of us cannot

agree, as to the right and duty of the magistrate to endow the Church and support religion from State resources. I do not think we differ as to the so-called Headship of Christ over the nations, and as to the duty of civil governors to regulate their legislation by the revealed will of God. It is rather as to the application of these great principles, more especially in relation to the support of the Christian Church, and the means which the magistrate may lawfully employ, and the Church lawfully take advantage of, for that end. I must say for myself that if I thought there was any likelihood of this difference becoming a practical one, I could not recommend union; because I do not see how such a considerable discrepancy as to the working of the Christian Church could be compromised or adjusted—(applause). It is because the differences as to all the Churches in question is purely speculative, and likely to remain so; and also because there are no more admirable expounders and ornaments of the principle of self-support of the Christian Church, on which we have all along relied, that I am fully prepared to bear cordially and honestly with the Establishment principle of these brethren, and to allow them every facility in stating and defending it, if they are prepared equally to bear with me—(loud applause)—and I may add that I believe we shall all be the better for the discussion. For myself, I may say that I am quite prepared to unite substantially upon the Canadian basis, or the Australian (and it is a vitally-important fact that these documents have been ruled by the Free Church at home to be in harmony with its Standards), or upon a declaration signed, in connexion with a movement commenced in 1856, by a name that must ever be mentioned with respect in this Synod—Sir George Sinclair—and which was issued in 1857. This declaration, in its sixth article, I will take the liberty to quote:—"That, in the judgment of both communions, it is a duty incumbent upon all men, and especially upon those in authority (from whom He who has given them much is entitled to expect the more), to recognise the paramount supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, as being the Governor among the nations, and consequently to regulate their conduct, in whatsoever capacity, by his laws; but as those who entirely concur in all other ecclesiastical matters may, and do entertain different views as to the course which the State is bound to pursue in reference to the interests of the Church, and more especially on the question of endowment (some holding that one denomination should be supported at the public cost; others, that different sects should be so simultaneously and proportionally; and others, that the pastors should be maintained by the members of their own communion), this point ought to be left as a question of forbearance, on which ministers and members may be allowed to entertain such a view as they deem most consonant with Scripture, and most conducive to the welfare of the Church—more especially as any formal deliverance on this subject is of no practical consequence in the case of self-supporting communions." It is well known that this scheme had the cordial support of our late revered father Dr. Brown, and that it was sanctioned not only by many influential laymen but by some leading ministers of the Free Church. If the brethren of the Churches concerned are now ready, as I hope and pray they will be found to be, to go into any such arrangement, the chief difficulty is happily surmounted; and the cause of Christian union has attained a greater triumph than ever before in this country, because a more considerable difference has been overcome by the force of Christian love without any sacrifice, as I humbly think on either side, of Christian fidelity to truth and principle—(applause). The only other difficulty of any considerable magnitude is the financial one, which exists in the case of the Free Church. It will certainly require very grave consideration in all quarters, whether the Free Church be asked for the sake of union to modify in accommodation to our views the system of a Sustentation Fund, or we be asked to go farther in developing our Supplementing Fund in accordance to them, or both systems be allowed to work simultaneously in the same

quite naturally and very considerably different from ours—and the rise and history of the two Churches perfectly explain that difference. But if we have found it possible already to combine in our own case a class of churches supported substantially on the United Presbyterian system, along with another class supported on the equal dividend system of our Sustentation Fund, there surely cannot be any insurmountable obstacle in the way of doing something of the same kind in a state of union with the United Presbyterian Church. (Applause.) On the whole, I can see nothing that presents any insuperable bar to this union; and I do see many things to render it eminently desirable, if it can be legitimately reached. I add only this—the expression of my thorough confidence that if we seek it, not for our own aggrandisement, not for any selfish or worldly end—(hear, hear)—but for the glory of God and the good of souls—it will at no distant period be happily and fully realised. (Loud applause.) In laying on the table of the Assembly the motion with which I am about to conclude, I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration of the way and manner in which this great question was introduced and discussed by the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church. (Applause.) They have made the first move, and they have made it in a tone and spirit every way worthy of Christian men and of a Christian Church. (Loud applause.) By the generous and confiding spirit in which they have approached us, by the noble candour and manly wisdom with which they have handled the subject, by the fine taste and temper with which they have conducted their discussion, they have, I do not hesitate to say, set us an example which we shall do well to imitate. (Loud applause.) It is an omen, I trust, that God's hand is in this work, and that what has been so well begun will be brought, in due time, to a happy and prosperous issue. (Applause.) God leads His people by ways that they knew not. Out of wars He maketh peace. By breaking up ill-assorted unions He paves the way for bringing together those who are more truly at one. (Loud applause.) Let us hope that the strifes and divisions of other times have been but as the voice of many waters, and as the noise of a mighty thunder, preceding and preparing the way for the gentler sound and for the sweeter strain of the harpers harping with their harps, filling our whole land with melody and mirth, and realising at length more fully than ever before, the prayer of the great Alexander Henderson, when closing the memorable Glasgow Assembly of 1638, that Scotland's name might become Jehovah-Shammah—"The Lord is there." The Rev. Doctor then submitted the following motion amid general and prolonged applause:—"The General Assembly, cordially approving of the object contemplated in the overtures, and recognising the duty, especially in present circumstances, of aiming at its accomplishment by all suitable means consistent with a due regard to the principles of this Church, appoint a Committee to take into consideration the whole subject of union among the non-established Churches in Scotland. And, in particular, the General Assembly authorise the Committee to confer with the Committee on Union recently appointed by the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, as well as with representatives of any of the other Churches named or indicated in the overtures, should occasion or opportunity of doing so arise. And the Assembly appoint the Committee to report upon the whole subject to the General Assembly of next year."

The Rev. CHARLES J. BROWN, Free New North, Edinburgh, said—I rise, not certainly without a solemn sense of responsibility, but without any hesitation as to the course of duty, to second the motion which has been laid on your table. (Applause.) Even if I thought that the difficulties in the way of union—safe and honourable union—between the Free and United Presbyterian Churches were greater than to my mind they appear to be, I should still deem it right to support this motion for a committee,—this motion, which, without carrying any marks on its front of jealousy and suspicion, simply proposes that we shall meet our friends of the other Church in a frank and brotherly spirit, and cordially so far respond to the resolution of their supreme court. But I desire to say freely at the outset of my remarks, that while I certainly have no wish, any more than Dr Buchanan, to hasten unduly so momentous an affair, yet it does not seem to

my mind that the difficulties in the way of this union ought to be found by any means of an insuperable character. It humbly seems to me that, if only they shall be met on both sides in a wise, unselfish, *brotherly*, loving spirit, they will not probably be found to be even of a character peculiarly formidable. (Applause.) Will you allow me to mention, that about eight years ago, when, in somewhat delicate health, I had occasion to visit a watering-place in the north of England, I had the happiness of meeting there for several weeks together a distinguished minister of the United Presbyterian Church—I mean Dr King—(applause)—late of Glasgow, now of London. Many a pleasant hour we spent in conversing together of the things of the Lord, and of the common salvation; many a passage of the Scriptures we talked of together, with joy and mutual profit. And, among other subjects, as you might imagine, we repeatedly came across the unities and the differences between our respective Churches. Once and again we entered very frankly, and in some detail, into the question of a possible union between the two—Dr King, be it remembered, having thirty years ago been one of the most decided as well as able of what used to be called the Voluntary party, and I having, at the same period, as my older brethren here are aware, been at least as staunch and steadfast an opponent of Voluntaryism. (Laughter.) Well, sir, I found, that in respect to the subject of the endowment of the Church by the State,—the subject of the lawfulness and expediency of the State endowing the Christian Church,—my excellent friend continued in 1856 very much, or I should rather say altogether, what I had known him in 1832, 1833, and 1834. Saving in that matter, however, I found that our ideas were so much in unison, and, in particular, I found that the views of Dr King were so much in substantial harmony with those which had always been my own, respecting the Headship of Christ over the nations, and the duty of the civil power generally in respect to religion, that I came to this conclusion, that, supposing Dr King a fair type of his Church, and I a fair type of mine, there ought to be no insuperable difficulty in the way of a union between the two Churches, without compromise of principle on either side. (Applause.) Moderator, I have used the words Voluntary and Voluntaryism; and I am very anxious to utter a sentence or two respecting these words. I say the words, because as to the things, I believe no man can tell precisely what these are—(loud laughter)—so many and different meanings do the words admit of, and so various are the meanings they have been made to bear. In one sense of them *we* are of course Voluntaries; and I think our friends will admit that in that sense we have been Voluntaries to some purpose. (Laughter and applause.) In another sense we are very strongly opposed to Voluntaryism. Ay, Moderator, and in that sense, the sense in which we used to understand Voluntaryism during the controversy on the subject thirty years ago, my belief is that the brethren of the United Presbyterian Church are not Voluntaries at this hour. But here I must ask you to let me explain my meaning with a little care. Every tyro in philosophy and theology knows how large a part of some bitter controversies has turned—been found in the end to have turned, on ambiguities of language. I am deeply convinced that, of all the things that are desirable and necessary as regards this great matter of an ultimate union between these two Churches, none is more important than the clearing of the whole atmosphere, as it were, by means of clear and accurate definitions. (Hear, hear.) Take this word Voluntaryism. We used to affirm—I will speak very frankly, and I do not think I shall offend any of my brethren of the other Church who are present—we used to affirm respecting our friends of the United Secession and Relief Churches of those old days, that principles nothing short of impious were involved, at least by just and necessary consequence, in what they often maintained in connexion with that word. Moderator, after all the dust and smoke of those years of strife have passed away, I confess I am strongly inclined to think that even then, at bottom it was the endowment of the Church by the State, at which alone our Voluntary friends designed to strike. But, unfortunately, they used certain very unhappy expressions about the civil magistrate having nothing to do with religion,—about the civil magistrate, in his official capacity, having nothing to do with religion,—which, if taken, as we perhaps were entitled to

take them—(laughter)—in their plain and literal sense, were of a very erroneous and dangerous character. Moderator, I thought then, and I think still, that they used expressions which looked very like the casting of all State affairs, and all administration of them, over into a region of pure secularity,—as if the State and religion, the civil magistrate as such, and the God of the Bible, were necessarily at antipodes to each other, and could have no possible common actings about any religious matter whatever. But, sir, before I go further, I wish to ask, did we, on the other side, use no language at that time—(hear, hear)—which was fitted to give just cause of offence to our brethren, and to wound their consciences? (Hear, hear, and applause.) I for one happened just thirty years ago, in the middle of that controversy, to write and publish a small volume—now, I believe, nearly forgotten—(applause)—entitled, “Church Establishments Defended, with Special Reference to the Church of Scotland”—the name Free Church of Scotland existed then only in God’s decrees. I am thankful for the opportunity I have to-day of declaring publicly in this house, that while I have not changed my mind since then in respect to any of the leading principles respecting the relations of Church and State which I endeavoured to make good in that volume, I am ashamed before the Lord—and have long been so in secret—of a good many things which I wrote in that little volume. I do not speak of mere juvenilities. It were not worth your while to be troubled with any reference to these. But I speak partly of certain bitternesses of language, which, if I know myself, I would rather put my hand in the fire than write again. (Applause.) I hope the Lord has forgiven them. But further, in the second part of the volume, which was occupied with the expediency of State Endowments of the Church, (even as I thought, and still humbly think, that in the first part I had made good their lawfulness,) I am now satisfied that in that second part I put the whole matter of the expediency much too strongly, unaware then of the immense power of voluntary liberality—(hear, hear)—especially in a great commercial age and country, and in a state of society such as we now live in. In fact, I put the case as if the Church of Christ could scarce exist in any tolerable measure of prosperity without endowments from the State. This, I am now persuaded,—and no thanks to me—(laughter)—after the Free Church financial history of the last twenty years—was a great and serious mistake. (Loud applause.) But to return—I have said that I am much inclined now to think that it was the endowment of the Church alone, which all along at bottom our brethren had really in their eye. But they used certain very incautious and indefensible expressions, which seemed to go, and, if followed out to their consequences, behaved to go, a great deal farther. And if any one is disposed to ask, How comes it that you are now disposed to put so mild a construction even on the former sentiments of those brethren? I answer, that if he prefer greatly to have it this way, that our brethren of the United Presbyterian Church have altered their opinions very materially during these late years, I will not stay to dispute that with him. I rather incline to think—I speak humbly—but I am inclined to think, that all along they and we were not so far asunder, except as to endowments—(hear, hear)—as we were disposed to believe. But, at all events,—and this is the important point now,—this has during these late years become more and more evident to my mind, that, saving and excepting in the one matter of the lawfulness and expediency of the State endowing the Church, our brethren and we hold substantially together, with respect to the duty of the civil magistrate, and of nations as such, about religion. For example, take the grand subject of the Sabbath. I will not dwell on the fact, that perhaps the ablest, fullest, soundest treatise of modern times on the whole subject of the Sabbath has lately come from the pen of a minister of the United Presbyterian Church—(applause)—the Rev. Mr Gilfillan of Stirling. But I entertain no doubt at all that the brethren of that Church hold with us, that it is the duty of the civil magistrate to protect, by public law, the outward rest of the Lord’s day; and this, not as the late Dr Wardlaw used strangely to maintain, with reference to the lower and more secular ends of the Sabbath alone, as conducive to physical health, but with reference to these as inseparably bound up with its higher and more peculiar religious uses and ends. So, in regard to the laws of marriage, I entertain no

doubt that our brethren of that Church hold with us, that it is the duty of the State to frame its laws respecting polygamy, and respecting the degrees within which marriage may not lawfully be contracted, in accordance with the Word of God, taking that Word for its supreme rule of legislation respecting the whole matter. I do not forget that they were accustomed to use expressions of old time about the civil magistrate having no right to judge of Scripture truth for his subjects, which, if followed out in their plain and full sense, would of course preclude the State from enacting laws about marriage, or any other laws, on the ground of Scripture. Still I just repeat my belief that our brethren hold with us that it is the duty of the State to frame its laws about marriage in accordance with the holy Scriptures, taking the Scriptures for its supreme rule of legislation in the matter. If there be less agreement between them and us in the article of national education, it is but fair to recollect that their views about the endowment of religion come so far in here, and, I think, are sufficient to account for any difference between us and them upon that subject. I will just add this one thing, Moderator, with respect to the strong objections which they take to all endowment of the Church by the State. If I still believed that those objections of theirs sprung out of the root, the deeper root, of objection to the magistrate's having anything to do with religion,—anything to do with the God of the Bible, or the Bible of that God—they will pardon me for even putting the case—I should hold that to be a fatal bar to union, and would not agree to the appointing even of a committee of conference. But I believe no such thing. (Applause.) Why, Moderator, our brethren, even in their allegation about the New Testament prohibiting the State from endowing the Church, must necessarily assume the duty of the State to learn at least that prohibition from the New Testament, and act on it accordingly. (Laughter and cheers.) I am persuaded that their hostility to the endowment of the Church by the State springs out of no such bitter, fatal root as that, but springs out of a fallacy—as we of the Free Church regard it—or rather a double fallacy, namely, their opinion, that the New Testament absolutely restricts and confines the support of the Christian ministry, its lawful support, to the free-will offerings of the people—as to which I cannot at this day concur with them any more than I could thirty years ago; and second, their opinion, that the endowment of the Church by the State is under all circumstances necessarily hurtful to the freedom and welfare of the Christian Church—as to which last opinion, I must acknowledge that they can make out a more plausible case—(laughter)—though here too I must humbly still differ from them, at least regarding the universality and absoluteness of their thesis. (Applause.) Now, if I am right thus far as respects the difference between the two Churches—the nature and extent of the difference—then the question at once arises, Does this difference respecting the lawfulness of the endowment of the Church by the State form a sufficient ground for the Churches remaining in a state of separation? (Hear, hear.) I answer without hesitation, No. (Loud applause.) For, first, there is nothing about endowments in our Confession of Faith or in our Formula, even as there is nothing *against* endowments in the Formula of our brethren—(hear, hear)—the difference here simply being this, that most of their ministers—I believe not the whole, but the great majority of them—hold the opinion that State endowments of the Church are unlawful, while we differ from that opinion. (Applause.) Second, we do not hold State endowments to be anything more than simply lawful, and, in certain circumstances, not inexpedient. As to the spiritual freedom of the Church, on the other hand, and her independence of the State, we, along with our esteemed brethren, hold that to be a sacred principle never to be abandoned or compromised. (Applause.) Endowments are not a principle, (it is perhaps a pity we ever used to speak of the “establishment principle,”*)—they are but one particular

* I have used the freedom of throwing in this parenthesis (though it was not spoken) in reference to a valuable remark made, in an after part of the discussion, by Mr Dunlop—namely, that I might have done well, when exposing the unhappy ambiguity of the term “Voluntarism,” to have noticed the no less unhappy ambiguity of another expression which we, on the other side, were accustomed to use, “the Establishment principle”—the truth being, that the only principle concerned in the matter was that of the right and duty of the civil magistrate in respect to religion generally; while the mere establishing or endowing of the Church, at the best was but a particular application of that principle.—[C. J. B.]

application of a principle—(hear, hear, and applause)—that of Christ's Headship over the nations, which application of the principle we of the Free Church judge to be in certain circumstances lawful, and not inexpedient; while our brethren, holding along with us the more general principle, differ as to that application of it. (Applause.) But then, thirdly, we have now no State endowments. We do not expect any. (Laughter and cheers.) We don't desire any. (Hear, hear, and renewed cheers.) I know that men given to deal in theories and bare logic will insist on putting this case, that our Claim of Right were by and by to commend itself to the approval of the British Legislature, and our endowments to be offered back to us on terms of perfect spiritual freedom. And they will insist on our declaring, yea or nay, whether in that event we should not be in conscience shut up to accept them, and become again the Established Church of the country? Moderator, I might perhaps decline to trouble myself and you with a question referring to a case so purely hypothetical—(laughter)—and in the last degree, as I think they themselves must admit, unlikely to be realised. But I am quite ready to meet it. I do not think that our principles shut us up, even in the supposed case, to accept those offers. (Hear, hear.) It would remain for the Church, in her now greatly altered condition, prosperous and flourishing without the aid of the State, her lot cast in a commercial age, and in a country of great wealth, circumstanced so differently every way from the Scotland of John Knox's day, to consider and determine whether, on the whole, it were not better and safer for her, and so more in accordance with the will of her Divine Head, to remain on simply friendly terms with so wonderfully pious a Legislature—(laughter)—as our questioners insist on imagining, but preferring withal not to accept the offered gifts. (Laughter and applause.) Why, Moderator, if I mistake not, it was but a poor £10,000 a-year that even Dr Chalmers, in the days of Church extension, ventured to ask and expect of the State. We now raise without difficulty more than ten times that sum in a year without the State at all. (Laughter and applause.) But suppose the emphatically unlikely case, both that those offers were made to us, and that, the two Churches having been united, we, holding the lawfulness of State endowments, should see it our duty to accept them, and carried the acceptance by a majority. Well, Moderator, for my part, I see nothing very fearful—even supposing such an event, and if things come to the worst—about our anti-State-Church brethren and us, if still unable to see together on this vexed question, just voluntarily separating again—(laughter)—as we had voluntarily united. (Laughter and applause.) I daresay, however, I owe an apology for arguing at all on a case so utopian and visionary. Moderator, I leave it to others more competent than I am to touch on the financial difficulties, or any others of a more immediately practical and business character, which may have to be got over in order to a union between the two Churches. I do not question that these will be found very considerable; but I have a confident persuasion that, supposing the way open to the union on the score of principle, all these practical difficulties would be gradually surmounted, according to the analogies of that blessed word of Abraham's servant in the 24th of Genesis—"I being in the way, the Lord led me." That this union, supposing the way open to it on the footing of principle, is a matter of positive duty to Christ, I hold to be so certain that I will not descend to any proof of it. (Hear, hear.) As to its high and varied Christian expediency, assuming its accordance with sound principle, I have a stronger and deeper persuasion on that head than I have language easily to express. Oh, what healing at length of wounds, of jealousies, heart-burnings, long alienations! No doubt it is written by the Holy Ghost—"first pure, then peaceable." But some good men, I think, are so exclusively taken up with the "first pure," that they never come even within sight of the "then peaceable." It would seem as if their version of the words should have been—"first pure, never peaceable." (Laughter and applause.) Then, what mightily increased power, and resources of every kind, for the prosecuting of all enterprises belonging to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ at home and abroad! (Applause.) What advantages for the exercise of a more faithful and effective discipline! (Hear, hear.) What increased stability to our Scottish Scriptural Presbyterian-

ism, in times when even moderators are fain in their distress to throw out hints towards a modified Episcopacy! What a barrier also might not be interposed between our beloved land and that broad-churchism, and laxity of doctrinal opinion, which, coming forth now scarcely disguised from professors of theology—(hear, hear)—I suspect threatens our land even more than the throwing out of those poor feelers after Episcopacy! (Hear, hear.) I know, indeed, Moderator, that some of my brethren have their fears respecting the depth of attachment in the sister Church to the good old Calvinistic theology. I have little sympathy with these fears. Alas! we have abundance of things among ourselves to watch over with jealous care. And to me it seems that the *tendencies* of a Church—I say that the manifested prevailing tendencies of a Church, are of chief importance with respect to its probable future—much as the mere state of a barometer at any given moment is less significant of the prospects of the weather, than its tending strongly upwards or downwards. I believe that, growingly and decidedly, the tendencies of our dear and esteemed brethren during these late years have been towards the ancient landmarks; and it seems to me every way probable that the effect of the contemplated union would be to strengthen and confirm those tendencies, and more fully to secure, that the soundness of principle so happily manifest among the leading minds of the sister Church, should more and more impart itself to their, as well as our, rising ministry, and to the people all over the land. And this leads me to touch on just one other matter before I sit down—I refer to the historical position of our Church. I am very far from being indifferent to our historical position. (Hear, hear.) I have long believed that a Church which has truth and Scripture on its side derives mighty advantage, different ways, from having a history also, and especially a martyr history, embodying its principles, and rendering them doubly dear and sacred, through the influence of many a cherished association. But then, I cannot forget that the soul of the Scottish Church—I say the soul and life of the Scottish Church from the beginning, has been, not its State endowments, but its spiritual freedom—(hear, hear)—Christ's Headship over the nations also, no doubt, but very prominently Christ's sole kingly authority in the Church, and, flowing out of that, the sacred liberties of His people, and the independence of the Church's government, as in relation to the State. And here our brethren and we are thoroughly at one. It is to be remarked, accordingly, that the words in our formula are these—"I approve generally of the principles respecting the jurisdiction of the Church, and her subjection to Christ as her only Head, which are contained in the Claim of Right, and in the Protest referred to in the questions already put to me;" which reference again is in these words—"Do you approve generally of the principles embodied in the Claim, Declaration, and Protest," and so on, "as declaring the views which are sanctioned by the Word of God, and the Standards of this Church, with respect to the spirituality and freedom of the Church of Christ, and her subjection to Him as her only Head, and to His Word as her only standard?" Thus, Moderator, our brethren and we having great, common, Scottish ground—the ground of all our reformers, in fact, the ground of our martyred forefathers—I am persuaded, that if through any temporary causes they have been led (I do not say they have been) to make rather less of the history than we have been led to do, I believe the effect of the union would simply be to lead them the more lovingly back along with us to the endeared memories of the past; while they and we together rejoice to rest our faith on no memories, and no traditions whatsoever, but on the authority of God alone, speaking in His holy Word. (Cheers.) What both Churches need above all, Moderator, is, doubtless, the continual baptism of the Holy Ghost—(hear, hear),—the continuous revival of God's work in the midst of the years. We have an excellent scriptural organisation—the moral power of which, I believe, would be mightily increased by this union. But oh that we might never forget that word—"Without me ye can do nothing,"—"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman watcheth but in vain"—"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty; and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." (Loud and prolonged applause.)

Professor GIBSON—I have often addressed this House under a deep sense of my responsibility, and have felt great difficulty in the duty which I felt myself called upon to discharge; but I never rose at any time in this House under a more solemn sense both of responsibility and difficulty than I do at this moment. But, Sir, the time is a very important and solemn one; and the issues of what shall be done in this Assembly are so very important, as well as the principles involved so fundamental, that I feel it my duty to state my own views, and I shall endeavour to do so without a single word offensive to any one. (Cheers.) But, while I shall endeavour to do that, I must have entire liberty to do my best to put this House in possession of the actual facts of the case, and make them understand what I believe to be the position in which we are placed. I shall go any lengths in most cordially expressing all that Dr Buchanan did in regard to what, I believe, was the cast and character of the discussion and procedure of the United Presbyterian brethren. When I read that discussion, I said to myself it will not be for want of talent if that Church is not to be a benefit to us,—that they have indicated nothing but the most perfect courtesy and Christian spirit, and that we could not do less than approach them in the same spirit,—and that to refuse to appoint a committee in the circumstances would be something like suicide to ourselves. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Therefore I have no feelings of that kind. It has been my privilege to take from the outset a part in negotiations for union, so far back as nearly thirty years ago, but not then so much as a member of a Church court, as in other positions where I had some means and opportunities of being useful in promoting that object. But I wish it to be understood that it was then with parties who held our own views—I allude, of course, to the Original Seceders. Now, if anything can commend the motion before the House to my acceptance, it is the fact that it includes those parties, as parties with whom we are not only willing, but, I trust, anxious to confer; and if we could get those parties and ourselves to come together, and our United Presbyterian brethren to do the same, as I expressed it in the court below, I would, so far as the public cause is concerned, live in faith and hope, and die content. Sir, I never did, and no Christian man can, object to the union and unity of the Church of Christ. (Hear, hear.) It is preposterous for anybody to do so. I admired exceedingly the most ingenious, high-toned, Christian speech of my friend Mr Brown, who, I remember well, was associated, I believe, with myself in the contentings to which he has referred at that early period. But I have just to say, Moderator, that I have not examined very minutely every word that I spoke, or every word that I wrote then, and I am not aware that I have any confessions to make. (Laughter and some hisses.) I acted then, as I hope I shall be able to act now, on my conviction of what are the principles of the Word of God, for which we were called to contend. If it will relieve anybody of any feeling as to the practical application, I am ready to go as far as Dr Buchanan or any other man can go in regard to raising the question about endowments. (Hear, hear.) I have no wish to raise that question; but when I say that, perhaps I may be one of those who are more logical than loving,—(laughter,)—but I have to say that logic is an important element in determining a practical question, and we will come to very little love indeed unless you have logic, and base love on the principles of God's Word; and therefore I must have liberty to carry out my principles to their practical results, even of endowment, if circumstances shall demand. You will come to very little love without truth; therefore I have no difficulty either in sympathising thus far with the statements of Mr Brown. I think he has raised in reality the great questions which we must face. He has raised these questions fully; and these questions we must face if we expect that this business about which we are now engaged shall come to a practical issue. I wish to say, Moderator, that I have no written speech, as I suspect will speedily be discovered—(laughter)—and on that account I must claim a little more indulgence. Besides, we must have, in a question of this kind, full, deliberative freedom. It is on that ground that I must be allowed to say some things which I could not have said in a previously written speech. At the same time, I have not come here without thinking on the subject. (A laugh.) I hold my views very dis-

tinely. Without entering into anything like controversy on the points that have been raised by the gentlemen who have preceded me, I think anything they have said may be met without the necessity of special reference. I think this just a time when there should be no special reference to any person or thing of one sort or another, either in regard to ourselves, or in regard to the body with whom it is proposed that we should unite. It is understood, then, that I do not object to the appointment of a committee. Of course, I never did that, as the motion I have submitted to the House implies. But I must say that Dr Buchanan did not make it very apparent, in the speech with which he favoured us, that there was not something in respect to which we might differ. He favoured us with no remarks on the general phrase in his motion,—“the principles of our Church.” Therefore I need not explain why it is that I do not feel at liberty to accept his motion, by referring to my own, and point out what I take to be the differences between the two. If I were certified that the phrase in his motion, “due regard to the principles of this Church,” had reference to what is stated in the motion I have submitted to the House, I would accept it at once. But I have not seen or heard any statement that it does so; and that opens up very serious and important questions. That is the only reason why I would not at once withdraw my motion in favour of Dr Buchanan’s. With these preliminary remarks, to shew what I conceive to be the defect in Dr Buchanan’s motion—especially as my own was on the table of the House since Saturday last, and that I did not see Dr Buchanan’s till this morning, so that he had full time to consider whether he would take these clauses or not—I am therefore entitled to assume, in the meantime at least, that he has not found it suitable or convenient to put his motion in that form. I have just to say that we must be very careful in a matter of this sort, and not be carried away by mere expressions of feeling. I entirely sympathise with the expression of a talented minister of the United Presbyterian Synod, who expressed his opinion that this question cannot be settled by mere feelings or expressions of love—that will go a very little way to settle these great practical questions, and we must look at them, therefore, with more calmness, and not under the influence of excited speeches, or of any excitement produced by them. I shall read a brief passage from a little book that I think it would be well that all the members of this House, if they have not done it, should read, and all who are intending such a movement as that now before us should read—I mean the work of the late venerable Dr M’Crie on “The Unity of the Church.” While Dr M’Crie distinctly condemns those who are indifferent to the great object of union, and those who stand upon mere sectarian crotchets—(I never do stand upon sectarian crotchets—(laughter)—I stand upon whatever I consider to be the Word of God, and the Standards of our own Church, and I would like to hear anybody apply the word “sectarian” either to the one or the other, although it is too fashionable to do it)—while Dr M’Crie distinctly condemns any such proceeding, he says:—“It is no less necessary to warn you, on the other hand, against being ensnared by fair and plausible schemes of union. Remember that the Spirit of Error takes an active part in the union as well as in the divisions of Christians, and be not ignorant of his devices. Of old he deceived the people of God by raising the cry of Peace, peace; and, so successful has he found this stratagem, that he has ever since had recourse to it at intervals. There is a rage for peace as well as for contention, and men otherwise wise and good have been seized by it as well as the giddy multitude. If religion has suffered from merciless polemics and cruel dividers, history shews that it has suffered no less from the false lenity and unskilful arts of pretended physicians,—the motley tribe of those who have assumed the name of reconcilers. They will say that they have no intention to injure the truth; but it is your duty carefully to examine the tendency of their proposals, and not to suffer yourselves to be caught with ‘good words and fair speeches.’ Have nothing to do with those plans of agreement, in which the corner-stone is not laid in a sacred regard to all that is sanctioned by the authority of your Lord.” That is the great truth,—these are the great principles,—upon which we must stand. Let me say, in regard to this matter of peace and love, that let any one read the epistles of the beloved and loving apostle, and he will see there which of the two

he places in the foreground, and on what account it is that he loves any one—he loves him in the truth and for the truth's sake. I wish many that talk so easily about love and peace would really study most carefully these most affecting and interesting epistles. They would at least be more forbearing and charitable to those who think it their duty to put the truth in the foreground; and I hold myself to be one of these. (Laughter and cheers.) But farther, I take this ground, that you will never have love if you have not the truth. You may have feeling; and any moment a feeling may arise against your brother, just as readily as against any other, unless you can love that brother in the truth. I have often repeated, as my formula, these words in the first chapter of the First Epistle of Peter,—“Seeing ye have purified your souls”—(how?—in obeying the truth; and how is that truth made efficacious?—in the way Mr Brown pointed out,) “through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with pure heart fervently.” That is the principle that I hold on this point, and which will do more to promote a safe union than any other way that you can think of. We owe it, in the first place, to ourselves that we fully understand our own position; and, in the second place, that we fully understand the principles of our brethren; and we owe it to them to give the fullest respect and attention to their views. I must be permitted to let the party with whom we are now asked to unite state their own principles in the present stage of their history. I cannot consent to take any general statement of mere belief by any brother, however revered that brother may be. I think this House should not consent to take a mere statement as matter of belief. It must be something more than a mere belief. I could state a great deal as to my belief, but I could not expect this House to listen to me. I must put this House in possession of what I think will be necessary to carry conviction to your understandings. The Assembly must bear with me till I read a few extracts from the revised speeches of the United Presbyterian Synod. (Cries of “Oh, oh.”) I daresay the parties who cry “Oh”—I can understand who they are perfectly well—want to carry this House, not by conviction, but by a mere flood of sentimental feeling, and I am not prepared to assent to that. (“Go on.”)

Mr LEITCH, Stirling—Moderator, is it from speeches that Professor Gibson is to read, or is it from authorised standards?

Professor GIBSON—I take their own exposition of their authorised standards, and if that is disclaimed, I will not attempt to read anything. I must be thrown back upon my own belief of their principles; and if I am not allowed to do that, I shall cease to address this House at all. (Laughter, and cries of “Go on.”) Then I hope I shall not be interrupted. (Laughter.) I will listen to argument, but I will not listen to anything else. (Renewed laughter.) Dr Cairns—and if any tributes of respect from words of mine to that gentleman could be of any value, although I have not the honour of personally knowing him, I would give them in the highest terms—Dr Cairns said,—“There are, however, real, and not inconsiderable difficulties which are involved in the very nature of the movement, and which require more than mere kindly feeling and accurate knowledge of facts to overcome. The first and chief of these is the undeniable difference which generally prevails in regard to the power of the civil magistracy.” Then, he adds,—“I do not think we differ as to the so-called Headship of Christ over the nations, and as to the duty of civil governors to regulate their legislation by the revealed will of God.”

Dr CANDLISH here rose, and called upon Professor Gibson to quote the sentences entire, adding that he must not garble.

Professor GIBSON—I am known to be as firm and honest in everything I do as Dr Candlish himself.

Dr CANDLISH—Read in whatever place you please, but read the sentences entire. I should not have used the word “garble.”

Professor GIBSON—Certainly not. If I attempt to abbreviate, to save the time of the House, am I to be accused of garbling? therefore you must submit to hear my full statement. Dr Cairns continued—“It is rather as to the application of these great principles, more especially in relation to the support of the Christian Church, and the means which the magistrate may lawfully employ, and the Church may

lawfully take advantage of, for that end. I must say for myself, that if I thought there was any likelihood of this difference becoming a practical one, I could not recommend union; because I do not see how such a considerable discrepancy as to the working of the Christian Church could be compromised or adjusted." I shall read some remarks by other members, and pass by some which I had intended to read. I now refer to the speech of Dr Johnstone of Limekilns. I have not happened to see that gentleman for more than forty years, but I remember the kindliness and intimacy between us when we were fellow-students; and though I differ from him on certain views, I must say my recollection of him is that of a talented, straightforward, upright man. I admired him in my boyhood, and I am quite willing to express the same admiration still. Dr Johnstone said—"No one will suppose that I attach little importance to the principle I have now stated, or that I do not avail myself of the paragraph in our formula, that we do not accept of anything in these books that teaches persecuting principles in religion, to say that I firmly hold the principle to which I have now adverted, that it is not within the province of the civil magistrate to provide religious instruction for the subject." Observe, he says, "It is not within the province of the civil magistrate to provide religious instruction." Well, then, I say I have not only a right to hold my theory, but in all suitable circumstances to carry my theory into practical effect. I have as little expectation of endowment as any member of this House, but I am not prepared to say that there are no circumstances in which, in accordance with the present state of this country, we are neither to wish it nor accept it. I would be willing to see the State so far doing its duty in behalf of the truth and the cause of Christ. I say most firmly, that I am not prepared to engage in any agitation in regard to the Irish Assembly receiving the *Requiem Donum*. (Cries of "Oh, oh.") I am not prepared to say that, in the circumstances of Ireland, I would take that away from these men, while we have reason to believe that the very religious Government, to which Mr Brown so happily referred, is not likely, even though you took that away, to forego the advantage, in their politics, of the Irish brass band. I do not think they will forego that, and therefore I am not prepared to say that we shall allow the one endowment while we shall not allow the other. Meanwhile, I am anxious to put you in possession of what is our actual position. There is another thing that I am anxious about. In my former friend Dr Johnstone's speech, he referred to the brief Confession of Faith in the Free Church of France, as compared with the number of propositions in the Westminster Confession. He refers to a statement of Woodrow. Woodrow, though a collector of documents, was somewhat garrulous and not a great authority on points of principle. Dr Johnstone would prefer that modern French Confession to ours. It has not more than two or three articles, and we must see where such views will lead us, and to what they must lead. I may say, in reference to that, that if you once begin to tamper with any point of your Confession, and make it a point of forbearance, I should like to know who shall determine what point you may not make a point of forbearance? I would have on that principle just as good a right to hold certain opinions with regard to the great doctrine of regeneration, and in regard to the great doctrine of atonement; and I would be as fully entitled to come up to this House, and demand forbearance on principles of that kind, as you are entitled to grant forbearance in regard to the power of the civil magistrate. (Cries of "No, no.") We must not be hurried away by mere feeling, without seeing where we stand. The venerable M. Monod said a few years ago, "We want doctrine. I would not look to the future,"—(I trust some of our men of progress will listen to that)—"I would no more look to the future for Christian doctrine than I would look to the future for the full tree which God himself had created." He added, "I am a backward Christian," by which I suppose he meant, "I go back to the Word of God for the full development of Christian truth there." I say that is an example for us to take—that is true progress, and nothing else is true progress in the Church of Christ. (The speaker was here interrupted by demonstrations of impatience on the part of the audience.) In the speech of Dr Harper he said, "As to the Australian basis, I believe there is an objection to the terms of it, as to the manner in which assent to the 23d chapter is qualified. That noble-minded, thoroughly honest, Catholic-hearted

man, Principal Cunningham—(loud cheers)—used this phraseology in regard to it, in the discussion on the Australian union, in commenting on the language that occurred in the basis of the Australian churches:—‘He admitted that fully and frankly; but he believed then, and he was still satisfied, that the qualification of simply taking the 23d chapter with the explanation that they did not adopt anything that taught or might be supposed to teach intolerant principles, was not wide enough to admit a Voluntary. He could not see how any Voluntary could adopt the 23d chapter of the Confession of Faith with so scanty and meagre an explanation.’ What shall we say to that? If it seemed in Dr Cunningham’s view that the language we have considered as securing a wider door for the admission of a Voluntary is not adequate for that purpose in the view of a Free Churchman, we must be careful what we are about. He added, that he was also farther impressed with the conviction, that if men who professed Voluntary views could honestly and intelligently subscribe the Confession of Faith with so meagre an explanation, there was a strong presumption that if men rightly understood one another, there was not so radical and fundamental a difference between them and some of the more reasonable Voluntaries as had been imagined. I say, therefore, it is necessary that we should distinctly understand the point of difference, and see that it shall be held as matter of forbearance, and that as such it shall never hereafter be called in question.” Well, sir, I will just say, in reference to that, that if these gentlemen will take the Westminster Standards, so far as principle is concerned, I have no objection at all to enter into union. I do not know anything more which we can be expected to say as honest men, holding our own views and our own principles. There are certain questions which Dr Cairns refers to, which he styles accidental, which I say at once are not questions that should divide and rend their own Church. I fully believe that there may be wrong decisions of a Church, even in favour of error; but I do not believe that is a reason for separation; therefore, I do not say, whatever I may think as to the mode in which these questions have been dealt with by our United Presbyterian brethren, that these are questions that should rend their own Church. But, sir, it is a very serious thing for us to be involved in such questions, having, as we now have, unbroken unity in such points. Dr Buchanan has alluded to unity, and I would not say that union would be perfectly destructive of unity. Unity is strength; mere union is not, strength. There must be unity of principle if that union is to be of any benefit. I had a conversation the other day with a very good lady. (Laughter.) I do not so entirely despise, as some of our friends do, what they are pleased to call “old wives.” I have met among them more penetration, right judgment, and intelligence, than I have sometimes met among men, and a great deal more simplicity, they not being trammelled with negotiation, and management, as gentlemen sometimes are. (Laughter.) This good lady being quite in favour of union—(loud laughter)—nevertheless added, “But we must keep to our own principles.” In a little while she asked, “What do you think of the Church of England?” I said, “That’s a union, but there is no unity; they have no unity or principle of action that could be made beneficial to the Christian Church;” and we must take care that we preserve unity of principle, and not fall into the same helpless condition. If all that has been said by the gentlemen who preceded me be true, that there is unity of principle, then I shall hail the union as one of the most delightful things of the kind that has occurred in my life. (Applause.) It is on that ground that I would go into committee, to have the question faced; and to face it rightly, not only in the view of the members of this House, but the whole of our people; and the Church at large should know what we are doing, and not overlook principles in the negotiations of the committee, however skilful or sound the committee may be. It cannot be denied that the 23d chapter of the Confession of Faith is the great stumbling-block, and I am prepared to defend it as the principle of all religious liberty. What is that principle when taken in connexion with other portions of the Confession of Faith? It is this, that whatever is done in the Church or anywhere else, by the Church, or the magistrate, must be according to “the mind of God.” That is his rule and limit. It does not allow him to act according to his own will, but to God’s will;

and unless he own that will, what is the result? His own will, or the law of the strongest; and you have not even the last resource of oppressed humanity, that of sisting the oppressor at the bar of the Most High. I ask my friends who hold the Voluntary principle in the way we rightly supposed they held it of old,—and I shall be exceedingly delighted if our past controversies have got rid of some of it; I have made the statement before, and it has been cheered by leading men in this House as a most important principle,—I say I wish to know, if you adopt the old Voluntary principle, (though we are told it is not done now, and I am delighted at that,) that the State and the magistrate have nothing to do with religion, on what principle can you go to the State and say that religion is beyond their province, and yet claim that they should not look into your proceedings or associations, or have anything to do with them? They would answer, “We are as good politicians as you, and better judges than you, of what is politic;” but you must tell them that the Word of God debars them from entering into the province of religion to its injury, or the hindering the free action of Christ’s house. How can you tell them that? The State, by Divine authority, has the right to look into the proceedings and actings of every corporate body within these realms, and to know what they are doing. If you take up a principle like that, you put yourselves simply and solely on the footing of a company of merchants. The only appeal you have against tyranny and oppression is to let the magistrate know that you appeal in the last resort to the Word of God. These were the principles for which our forefathers contended and bled. We are not met here to determine questions of politics, and political arrangements, but to determine principles according to the Word of God, as we hold and declare them. One great ground upon which we contended for the connexion between Church and State was the principle involved in the act of 1592,—viz., that the State shut out its own courts from meddling with us, because God has given those rights and that liberty to His own Church. I say, if we could get that state of things restored on right scriptural grounds, and inserted into the constitution of the country, it would be one of the mightiest blessings of the free action of discipline without the interference of the civil courts that we could obtain. (Applause.) You may say you can shut them out by popular influence; but the judges are shewing they don’t care about popular influence, and they take their own way. But if you get the State to enact that they shall not interfere with you, then you have freedom of discipline and action. These principles are of the utmost importance; and I am prepared to shew that the principles involved in this chapter of the Confession is a Reformation attainment. Did not the Wickliffes, the Luthers, and the Knoxes appeal to the nobles and rulers of their day to recognise and act upon their obligations to God, and their responsibility to Him, and put away the tyranny of Antichrist? The Confession of Faith is neither a political nor an ecclesiastical code; but it is a statement of what the Word of God teaches in the Old Testament and the New. There is a great deal said now-a-days about the Old and the New Testaments, as if the former were no longer to be the rule of faith it once was; but I am prepared to take the responsibility of shewing that the non-recognition of this authority is a great danger, and introduces serious evils. We are called to act as expounders of God’s Word; and it is in this capacity we are here to determine this question. Whatever you may say about rulers not doing their duty, it is incumbent upon us as ministers of the gospel of Christ to let them know their duty, whether they do it or not. I don’t care for a certain recognition of our principle, if we have not the liberty to act upon it. Allusion has been made to the Sabbath. I should be delighted to see our United Presbyterian brethren as one man, or a large number of them, petitioning Parliament, on suitable occasions, to use their authority for the preservation of the Lord’s-day. I do not ask them to try to make men religious by Act of Parliament. I remember Dr Wardlaw’s distinction. It was, that the Sabbath was every man’s property, and as such, the magistrate ought to protect it. Dr Willis answered him very well when he replied, “If it is every man’s property, he may sell it to the highest bidder.” That answer was so complete, that the late Dr Marshall came undoubtedly to the statement that it might be a question whether religion would not gain more by

letting every man do what he would on the Lord's day, his belief being that it would gain. But then, he did not reflect, as any of us who have been in foreign countries know, that good men have been hampered and fettered, and their tone lowered, by the circumstances in which they were placed. Without dwelling at length on the religious education and marriage questions, I shall only say, that if I shall get the security of free action for ourselves on these points, I shall be satisfied; but I have this to say. (Manifestations of impatience.) Certain parties, I know quite well, find this line of argument unpalatable, but I am prepared to take it and pursue it. I now state some facts, and I shall be delighted to know that the state of things they bear upon is altered. A friend in the House has said that I misrepresented our Voluntary brethren on this point, but I shall be glad to be corrected if I am wrong. At the time when the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway Directors ceased to run trains on Sabbath, a strong effort was made by parties not belonging to the United Presbyterian Church certainly, but by parties of an entirely different cast, to compel the Directors to run them. Memorials were sent in from all parts of the country, amounting to 1569 or nearly 1600. We obtained the list, and of all that could by any process of construction be ranked as holding the Voluntary principle, and giving them credit for some about whom we were not quite certain, there were only 36 memorials from sessions, congregations, or presbyteries, of those who held that principle. But there was a reason for that. We were in the habit of coupling the Old and the New Testament authority together; and Dr Wardlaw, on another point in reference to baptism, said, "The new enactments require a statute of repeal of the old, and I demand the statute of repeal." That could not be given; but this mode of reasoning has had a disastrous influence on the question of Sabbath observance, for the fourth commandment is not in the New. I was a member of the Sabbath Alliance, with some of my brethren of the United Presbyterian Church, and several of us were appointed to draw up a basis of union, and those on the committee who held the Voluntary principle would not allow us to take the fourth commandment simply and solely. Whether my inference is logical or not, I think that is calculated to have a great effect in the consideration of practical questions. I wish to point out to my brethren in the country that the point about the management of the Sustentation Fund will require very mature deliberation. My belief is that the prevailing sentiment in the United Presbyterian body is, that they don't like the Sustentation Fund. Our strength will be divided on what I believe essential in the present state of things to provide for religious instruction. (Renewed murmurs of impatience.) I don't care very much for the galleries. (Laughter.) I come here to address the understanding of the intelligent, who have a judgment to govern. I am just about to close. (Applause.) It is imperatively necessary to know where we are. That must be known not only for ourselves and our people, but for the sake of the body with whom we are proposing to hold conference. It would not be treating them as men of intelligence, as men of understanding, and holding firmly, as I believe they conscientiously do, their own views, if we were to take it for granted that, by the mere fine talk of love and union, they were to forego these. They told us plainly in their speeches in the Synod that they will not. Are we prepared to do so? I care very little about the talk we hear of progress, and that we should go on according to the spirit of the age. My progress is progress in the knowledge, belief, and practical instruction of the Word of God. That is the progress I wish. I care nothing at all for these high-flown sentiments of the progressistas. A sermon has appeared in the newspapers by a certain gentleman of the United Presbyterian Church, who preached against this proposed union. I have the greatest respect for his brother, the Rev. James Gilfillan of Stirling—I love the man—I had the honour to know him as a boy, and I am bound to say that he is the worthy son of a worthy father; and I cannot say that of other people who publish sermons on union. (A laugh.) I thank the House most cordially for their attention, and I have just to say, the responsibility of our separation does not lie upon us. If our brethren will in reality hold by the principles of the Secession, even as professed in their own doctrines as late as 1827, I shall be most happy to unite with them. (Applause.)

But if they don't, if they depart from these principles, then the guilt of separation does not lie upon us; let people distinguish between them. The reverend Professor then read the supplementary words he wished to make to the resolution—viz. : “That the following shall be added to the motion of Dr Buchanan :— ‘And that in dealing with any proposals for union among Presbyterians in Scotland, the Committee have due regard to the maintenance in their integrity of the principles of the authorised Standards of this Church, and especially to those distinctive principles for which this Church has been honoured to contend and to suffer. And further, that such Committee shall only have power to confer with these parties, and to report to next General Assembly.’ ”

Dr FORBES, Glasgow, said—I feel deeply the peculiar solemnity and interest of this occasion, and I desire to speak in view of that. I desire to speak the truth plainly, and, at the same time, in love; and certainly I have the very greatest respect for the important Christian Church that has done us the honour to request that we should take steps initiatory to the formation of a union with them. We must recollect that they are the descendants of the Erskines, the Fishers, and the Moncreiffs, with whose trials we were accustomed to console ourselves during our own struggle in a similar cause; and we are happy, even at this period, 1863, to find them come forward in their public capacity as a Church, to recognise us as a party whom they consider to hold essentially the same doctrines, and maintain the same mode of discipline, and also from the wish to have us united to them in co-operation. I consider that this is a very important invitation on their part; to be received by us with the highest respect, and to be treated with the greatest charity. I consider, sir, that there are in this matter very important matters for deliberation previous to our attainment of the desired union. There was an old proverb which the late celebrated Lord Chancellor Eldon was reported to have adopted in early life, and to have formed as a rule of conduct, and certainly his public life illustrated it, perhaps to an extreme, and it was in these terms :—“It is soon done, when it is well done.” In other words, avoid haste in order to accomplish a desirable object, and get it well done, rather than hurry on and get yourselves involved in a mess, when you may perhaps find cause to regret your rashness. I believe that sentiment will be endorsed by the two Churches, and that we shall act in the spirit of it; that we not only desire union, but a good union—an established union. I do not intend to go much into the past. We have heard confessions to-day. I have no confession to make, because, though I lived at that period, I am not conscious of having taken any decided leading part in giving expression to my views. But, sir, in the same spirit of peace I would humbly suggest to this Church the important duty of calmly and faithfully proceeding to the settlement of the matters that may come up for deliberation, with a view to prevent future controversy—(hear, hear)—with a view to prevent future strife. I heard to-day the sentiment go forth in a popular way—I daresay it was not meant to carry any great impression—that in a certain contingency we might just dissolve the union. I would deprecate that. (Hear, hear.) I say, rather no union than have union followed up by disunion. (Hear, hear.) Now, sir, we are here to lay the foundation of the work. As is the foundation, such will be the building. If we do not take care to have our foundation well laid—laid upon well-understood, fully-acknowledged principles,—we will find ourselves in a misunderstanding. Our intercourse may again re-echo the language of strife and controversy. Our past history as a Church calls us to be cautious. I believe the element of strife that created in the Established Church first a secession, and subsequently a disruption, was a too facile comprehension of men who were in heart and spirit Episcopalians; but when the kind Presbyterians gave them their offices, in order that they might not throw them and their families out on the world, in the spirit of charity—of a charity good in itself, but, as it appears, short-sighted in its results—they took in a party, and nestled it in their bosom, whom they found to be the origin of what was called the Moderate party, and the fruit of all the evils in that party, realising the truth of the proverb, that it is a dangerous thing to nurse a snake in the bosom. I have no idea to apply that in this case. I believe our friends are as desirous of union with a view to

its permanence and its beneficial influence on the country and the Church as we ourselves; but I state it to shew that we ought to be careful that the principles upon which the union is formed are in full accordance with the Word of God, and that they are such principles as we can all continue to hold amicably, unitedly, and zealously. I would just express the feeling that has led me to adopt Dr Gibson's motion. Both motions are substantially the same. Both motions proceed upon the principle that this is a very great and important matter, and that it requires to be seriously and deliberately considered by the Assembly. But I think that Dr Buchanan's motion does not give sufficient prominence to the matters that we will have to look to as matters of difficulty, and that Dr Gibson's motion brings out these more fully. In both there is a reference to difficulties and a desire for union; but I think there is more caution in the way in which the subjects are brought out in Dr Gibson's motion—a caution to the committee to take care that nothing be conceded which may be said to be opposed to the integrity of the principles of the authorised Standards of this Church, especially to those distinctive principles for which this Church has been honoured to contend and suffer. Now, I do give the United Presbyterian Church full credit for stanch adherence to their principles and Standards, and I trust they will give us credit for being equally enlightened and equally sincere in our attachment to our principles and Standards. I could not conceive that they would come to us under the idea that there was an essential difference, and that such an offer of union would be made. We have heard to-day an explanation of their principles, and we have a document before us stating the circumstances that arose in the Synod upon this subject. Now, sir, we have to do with very important principles. We have to do with matters of the highest importance; and I do think that if a party were to come,—and I take not the case of the highly respected Church I referred to,—suppose our friends up the way were to come and send a deputation wishing union with us, to say to us,—“Oh, you must come in without any regard to your distinctive principles,”—in what way would we understand that? I would understand it as a call to surrender,—not as an invitation to union,—a call to the fortress to open its doors and march out, to give them possession. Now, you must remember, that on the part of the United Presbyterian Church there must be a full conviction that we are to hold our principles without surrender,—that we are to stand to them as we have done in days of difficulty and trial; and we have no cause of regret for doing so—(applause)—that whilst we desiderate union, it is impossible for us as a Church to accept of union in any other way, or upon any other ground whatever, but upon the entire and full admission of the great principles which we hold. I would not wish to open matters of controversy; but I have read over some of the addresses in the United Presbyterian Synod, and there were certainly matters that came up there from certain speakers that I might consider not very much in the way of union; and it is somewhat remarkable,—I never spoke to Dr Gibson privately on the matter,—that the very passages he quoted were passages that I had marked as having a character that appeared to me unfavourable to the object in view. A highly respected speaker in the Synod stated that we might hold the peculiar views of our Church, and that they might hold the peculiar views of their Church, in regard to civil magistrates, without bringing them out prominently—that we might keep them, so to speak, in abeyance. These were not the words, but that is the meaning. Now, I would admit that there are certain principles that we might hold, and yet not require to act upon; but I consider that the relation between the magisterial ordinances, and the ecclesiastical ordinances of the Church or the State, is so close, and the two so immediately related to each other in so many important points, and bring up so many practical matters, that it is impossible for any Church, but that it must either maintain that there is no practical relation between governments and Churches, or that there is a relation which must, to a certain extent, and for certain ends, be duly carried out; and there are questions of recent occurrence that shew this. I do not think that the Voluntary principle is at all limited to endowment. I consider that is the very lowest forms of Voluntaryism. (Hear, hear.) I consider that there may be a Church which the magistrate does his duty to, and which he does not endow,

and that there may be a Church endowed by the magistrate, and that the magistrate may fail to do his duty to the Church. I think it is the duty of the magistrate, as well as the duty of the Church, to carry out the principles of the Word of God in all matters of legislation, and that it is the peculiar province of the Church to ask the magistrate—to exhort and urge upon the magistrate—the carrying out of the principles of the Word of God. (Hear, hear.) For example, with regard to the law of the Sabbath; when the question comes up before our Church courts, if there be any desecration on the Sabbath, whether the magistrate should be required to put it down. I think the Church should ask the magistrate to do so. I say it is no persecution, but it is the duty of the magistrate to exercise his power to preserve the Christian Sabbath. To say that this is persecution is virtually to say that the law of God is not the holy, beneficent, and wise thing which we say it is, and that to administer and carry it out is not consistent with liberty. (Applause.) I do not enlarge upon that; but I say that Voluntaryism, in the sense that I have referred to, is a principle that there is no relation between the Church and State—a principle that cannot be carried out. The Church may say, we will not allow the magistrate to interfere; but can the Church bind the magistrate not to interfere? Can the Church say to the magistrate, “You must not interfere?” It cannot; and I look upon our Confession of Faith, as Dr Gibson has said, as one of the greatest securities of our public liberties. I say that the only way in which you can bind the sword of the magistrate is, not by meeting the sword with force, but reaching the conscience of the magistrate through the Word of God, and bringing the magistrate under obligations—constitutional obligations—to carry out certain principles which the Church acknowledges and acts upon, and to give the Church full liberty to carry out those principles, and aid the Church in carrying them out. I consider these are questions which cannot be kept in abeyance, but upon which the Church will constantly be called upon to act. And how much would it be regarded as an evil, if in our Church courts there should be one section zealously contending that there were certain questions in which the magistrate should interfere, while another section should protest against any such course being taken, as unscriptural,—not only as inexpedient, but as positively contrary to the Word of God. A Church in that position would be like a house divided against itself. I consider that a strict attention to these matters is equally necessary to the efficiency of the Church, and the good of the State. I reckon, indeed, that our circumstances now would seem as if the magistrate looked coldly upon us, and perhaps there are some principles arising out of the Disruption which have made us think that the Establishment is not much worth the contending for. The Church may say what the old Grecian said of himself when he was accused of shewing great favour for the high in life, and the rich, and the influential. He was charged with being a time-server, but his reply was—“Oh, I do that, not because I need the rich or powerful, but because they need me.” Now, I say that the State needs the Church even more than the Church needs the State. (Hear, hear.) And I say it will be a fatal day for Scotland when our Churches are muzzled on all matters of importance, political and ecclesiastical, which are constantly occurring where the public morality, and order, and peace, are concerned, and matters relating to the law of God and the Word of God. But there are several other points, I observe in some of these addresses, which I regret very much. Dr Gibson has referred to one of them,—that is the way of speaking about the Confession of Faith, as if it might be curtailed and abridged. Now, I put a great deal of stress upon what was said on that matter, because what was said was received with applause, and I did not hear any contrary statement. Now, I look upon Confessions of Faith as very important documents indeed. (Hear, hear.) They are of very great moment in various ways. They are very important as bearing the testimony of the Church to what it holds to be the mind of God in great matters. I look upon our Confession of Faith as a bulwark against controversy. Most of the articles of the Confession of Faith embody principles and truths which have been contested in past times, and which the Church has finally made up its mind upon, and settled according to the Word of God. To make it shorter would be for the Church to let down this testimony, and create contro-

versy on the point once more. On that ground, then, our Confession may be somewhat large, yet it is not larger than the history of our Church shews to be necessary and expedient. It is a testimony against Deism, a testimony against Arianism; in short, against all the hereticalisms which have emerged from time to time. That is the standard which puts up the testimony of God against those errors being ever brought into the Church. (Applause.) I consider the Confession of Faith as a fundamental document in relation to the State. The Church, we all know, was nursed in, and has again and again suffered persecution from the wicked and malicious defamations of the enemies of the Church poisoning the ears and the hearts of men in power against the Church of Christ, clothing it as with the garb of a wolf, and then, like the wolf, extinguishing it. It is therefore of importance to have a public standard like the Confession of Faith, and to have the Government of this country bound to acknowledge the Confession of Faith as consistent with the Word of God, and as containing the doctrines and the truths of the Church. Why, sir, it was only in our own day that many who were not far from the throne, and who had more access to the Government than we had, poisoned the ears of men in power with regard to the principles of the Free Church, and the actions of the Free Church. I believe we were very much considered in the light of democrats and anarchists. We adhered to the Confession of Faith which we still hold to-day, and I believe that might have prevented the Government of the day going to the extent that it otherwise would have done. In the days of the Stuarts we all knew that the want of a Confession of Faith was the great means of stirring up the jealousy of Government against the Church; and I consider that in that light it rather tends to indicate a want of due attention to history and experience, to speak lightly of the Confession of Faith. I will just conclude by referring to another point which I regret; and I regret it the more because it came from a quarter that I had always been accustomed to look to with the very highest respect and esteem—a gentleman who is an honour to the Church to which he belongs, and would be to any Church. He says that one might think it would not be too much to ask the Free Church, in the prospect of a union, to make a modification of the Sustentation Fund, with a view to meet the views of the United Presbyterian Church. I am not perfectly conversant with their principles, so as to make any remarks upon that; but I consider that our Sustentation Fund, as was said yesterday, has been the backbone, temporally speaking, of the Free Church of Scotland; and I do think it would be too much to ask us to break our backbone. I say the Sustentation Fund is a very important interest. Dr Buchanan will, I am sure, be on the committee, and I am quite sure he will do full justice to that interest. (Hear, hear.) I think in regard to Voluntaryism I may speak confidently of the people of Scotland, that they had their minds pretty well enlightened upon that subject, and that they understood very well the distinction between the Established principle in the proper sense, and not the Endowment principle—the scriptural principle on which the Church and State should stand towards each other, and the service which they should render each other. The people of Scotland understood the principle just as well as the ministers. Now, what is the Sustentation Fund? It is the testimony of the Free Church public of Scotland that they approve of our Church in all its principles, and in all its contendings. They support us because we hold the principle—(applause)—and I do think that if we were to relinquish the principle, many of them would regard us as not a Church. At any rate, I do not think anybody could say we are a voluntary Church, because we are voluntarily supported. I claim for our Church our privilege of action, as hitherto, in all matters of government, where the Word of God calls for it, to lift up a testimony, either of approbation or disapprobation, of public measures,—measures connected with the interests of religion and morality. I claim that our Church reserve that right, and should on no account let it be conceded. I will just conclude by remarking, that in one respect I am exceedingly happy to think that this measure has come before this General Assembly. There has been a good deal of movement out of doors about it. Some of our friends have taken a more leading part in these movements than others; and perhaps that might have given the impression in some quarters that there was some real difference

amongst ourselves. There is no such thing as that. There is no difference between us. We all heartily desire union; but ~~that~~ union must be in connexion with principles which should be held inviolate. There may be an idea that this would be an easy question; but I hope there will be no such idea in future. It requires the most serious and grave consideration of the difficulties in the way. I hope that, through the grace of the Divine Head of the Church, we may be brought to see eye to eye. I believe that we have but one common feeling,—that we wish to see Scotland flourishing, as in those happy days when she had but one Church, and when that Church embraced, if not all, yet the greater part, of the piety of the land; and I hope, therefore, our measures will tend in such a direction that we will all have cause to rejoice in whatever we have done, whether in the way of promoting or directing union. (Applause.)

Rev. Dr GUTHRIE, who, on rising, was received with loud cheers, said—Moderator, I cannot consent to give a silent vote upon this great and momentous occasion. When I say that I intend to vote for Dr Buchanan's motion, I say nothing that can take this house by surprise. I have made no progress—any more than my friend Dr Gibson. (Laughter and cheers.) I am in the very position to-day that I occupied in the year 1843, when making my first speech as a Free Church minister in a Free Church Assembly. Whether I have logic or not—(laughter)—I have a pair of eyes, and I see long ahead of me, which is more than Dr Gibson can say—with all his logic. (Laughter and loud cheers.) I stand up to express the very sentiments which I did in the first Free Church General Assembly. I find, on turning to the *Witness* of that period, that I said,—"I am for a union in the meantime in the way of co-operation." Referring to the evangelisation of the dark and destitute districts of this city, I said,—"I will rejoice with all my heart if the Evangelical Dissenters of every denomination in Edinburgh would come and sit down with us in friendly conference. I would propose to Dr Brown, you take that portion of the work, and to Mr Alexander, (now Dr Alexander,) you take that, and I will take this; let us divide the labour, and go forth to the heathen lands of Edinburgh, just as we go to the heathen lands of Africa. We cannot stop there, and I defy any man to stop there who heard our Clerk this evening read the touching and affecting prayer of Jesus for His disciples. What is first and foremost in the prayer? What is mentioned once, many times,—what is repeated over and over again, but this,—'That they may be all one, as I and my Father are one?' I never will rest contented,—I never will cease to pray and work until that end is achieved; and as I do so, I will bury in oblivion the memory of former controversies. (Applause.) Oh that the day were come—it is not very distant now—(loud cheers)—when I might meet with my brethren in this House over the grave of all former controversy; that we might shake hands, and join hearts, and be one in Jesus Christ,—one regiment, bearing the same colours, and going forth like an army mighty for battle against one common and tremendous foe!" This is my wish. It may not be realised immediately, but the sooner the time comes the better for the cause of Christ—(applause)—and therefore, I say, I rejoice that the controversy has ended. I do not claim infallibility, like some of our brethren—(laughter)—I do not come here now to make a confession; I made it long ago. (Laughter and cheers.) I find I said on that occasion,—"I am not ashamed to confess that, in the Voluntary controversy, while my opponents said things to me and my party that they ought not to have said, I also said things to them and their party which I ought not to have said." (Loud cheers.) I rejoice, sir, that time has now brought round this happy day; and, besides pleading for union in the first Assembly of the Free Church, I beg to add that I have seized every opportunity of helping on this cause since then, co-operating most heartily with a gentleman whose name, I am sure, when I mention it, will be received with honour in this Assembly—Sir George Sinclair. (Loud cheers.) That gentleman has done much to bring about the great result we are striving for. This union, when accomplished, will lie under the greatest obligations to that good and distinguished man. (Applause.) He prayed, he laboured for it,—he did everything that man can do to smooth its way. He is this day reaping the seed he then sowed; and I rejoice

to know that, amid domestic bereavements and the infirmities of advancing years, the prospect of this union at no distant period is gilding the clouds that gather around his old age, and is giving such comfort to that great and good man as all of us would wish and pray that he might richly enjoy. (Loud cheers.) I shall not detain the House long, nor do I think it will be necessary to do so. But before proceeding further, there is another confession, perhaps, that I should make, and it is this—that I have always had a warm side to the Seceders. (Laughter and cheers.) It is a possible thing that love may blind my judgment; but I would rather any day be blinded by love than hatred. (Loud cheers.) I am thankful for the disposition—if I possess it—to think too well of people rather than too ill of them. (Laughter.) But my regard for the Seceders—if I may be allowed to allude to a personal matter—and I only refer to it in so far as it bears upon this question—I say my regard for Seceders is no causeless prejudice, but is founded upon a better knowledge of that body than perhaps many in this House enjoy. One of my parents was a Seceder, a sainted mother—how she would have rejoiced to see this day! My mother and other two members of my family felt themselves constrained, by the intrusion of an unpopular minister into the collegiate charge of Brechin, to leave the parish church; and in consequence of the accommodation in the parish church being rather deficient, when we were young we were all Seceders. (Loud laughter.) Until I came to college, I was in the regular habit of sitting in the Burgher Church; and until the time when I became and was employed as a probationer, I generally worshipped on the Sabbath evenings in the Burgher Church of Brechin. I do not think, sir, that I lost anything by that. (Loud cheers.) With my mother's milk I drank in an abhorrence of patronage; and it was at the knees where I learned to pray that I first learned to form a deep reverence for the Bible as the inspired Word of God,—that I learned a high regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath, and the peculiarities of Scottish religion, and my attachment to those principles of civil and religious liberty which have made me hate oppression and resist the oppressor, whether he appears in the shape of a Pope, a prelate, or a patron, an ecclesiastical despot, or an ecclesiastical demagogue. (Loud cheers.) Sir, I have been behind the scenes of the Secession body. (Laughter and cheers.) I have seen them outside in, and inside out. (Loud laughter and cheers.) I know that body better than a large number of my brethren do, and sir, the name of a Seceder is dear to me; it sounds in my ear like music, and goes home to my heart. (Cheers.) While saying this, however, I don't say they were perfect—I don't know anybody that is perfect but my friend there (Professor Gibson) who has nothing to confess at all. (Loud and prolonged laughter.) Let no man say he will never change—make no progress. With their divisions into Burghers and Anti-burghers, Lifters and Anti-lifters, Old Lights and New, with their aversion to Paraphrases and Hymns, to gowns and bands, to a cross on the outside of the church, or any ornament whatever in the inside, there is no denying that our friends were a little narrow. (Loud laughter and cheers.) There are worse things, however, in the world than narrowness. The way of life is narrow—there are jots and tittles in the Word of God—there are pins as well as pillars in the tabernacle; and while I am not a man of points, but of principles—and points and principles, let me say, are as far asunder as the two poles—(Cheers)—nevertheless, I have lived long enough to see that broad things may be more dangerous than narrow, and that in a Broad Church a man may be more unsafe than in a narrow one. (Renewed cheers.) It is said that my friends the Seceders were narrow-minded and gnarled. If so, they were a gnarled oak, solid in the grain and sound to the core, firmly rooted in the ground—the timber of which, above all others, men choose to build the ship in which to fight battles on the deep or ride out the storm. (Cheers.) I knew the old Seceders well. (Renewed cheers.) Perhaps we may find that there is not so much difference between them and us as there used to be. This may be, not because the old Seceders have come down to us, but because we have risen up to them. (Cheers.) They have now no exclusive right to the honour of having their name made a reproach because of their piety. I remember the day when it was so—the time when the man who would not swear or debase himself, who maintained family worship, would talk to another

about his soul, and rebuke his fault, was sneered at as a Seceder. Dr Burns of Kilsyth used to tell how, when travelling in a stage-coach north of Aberdeen, he encountered a farmer, who, it turned out, was on the way to see his minister about baptism. Dr Burns seized the opportunity of putting a good word into the man's ear; speaking to him about the importance of the ordinance. Whereupon the other looked at him astonished, and said, "Ye'll be a Sinceder, man?"—(loud laughter)—and when Dr Burns repudiated the connexion—(renewed laughter)—telling him that he was mistaken, and that, so far from being a Seceder, he was a minister of the Established Church,—the man, more astonished still, exclaimed, "If yer no a Seceder then ye'll be frae the south—" (Roars of laughter.) Adding, "We dinna trouble oursel's much about these things here. The fact is, if the lairds are guid to us, we dinna fash oursel's about the ministers." (Prolonged laughter.) I will give an example from my own experience. I was returning from the General Assembly to my own parish of Arbirlot, when, between Dundee and that place, a man mounted the coach who was pretty drunk. He had no sooner seated himself than he began swearing at a shocking rate; and while I was thinking how I could close the blasphemer's mouth, and whether such an attempt might not be like casting pearls before swine, his neighbour on the other side turned round, and solemnly and affectionately rebuked him; whereupon, with eyes rolling in his head—(laughter)—and speech thick in his mouth, and a fiendish sneer lurking in his cheeks, he looked round, and said,—"Ye'll doubtless be a Seceder." (Loud and prolonged laughter.) In this case the drunken man uttered a truth—the gentleman was a Secession minister. I tell you, and my friends who are sitting with us in this House, that the day has gone by for such remarks, and that Seceders, as I am happy to think, have no longer the exclusive right to be thus reproached for godliness. (Loud cheers.) This should make a union all the more hearty and practicable. The Seceders have not sunk, but we have risen. The descendants of those good old Seceders, so far as I know, have not forfeited their title to be considered worthy of their ancestry. It is true that we had rather a keen controversy with them a good many years ago. They boldly attacked the Established Church, and I, along with others, did my best gallantly to defend it. The war grew hot; and as shell and shot flew thick, wounds were both got and given. (Laughter and cheers.) We have heard to-day of wounds to be healed. In regard to myself, allow me to say, my wounds were healed long ago. The fact is, I have a good constitution. (Laughter.) We defended Establishments as long as they were worth defending—(cheers)—and in doing so did our duty, sir. (Cheers.) It is a notable and curious thing that all those, with hardly any exception, who defended Establishments in 1843 left them—left them never to return, never thinking of returning. (Cheers.) And we have cause to bless God for His great kindness to us since that trying day. (Cheers.) Practically the question of Church endowments has with us lost all its importance. I am not speaking of theories and fine points. I do not understand fine points. A friend of mine once said when we were discussing a matter of difference, "Ah, there is a fine point!" "My good friend," replied I, "you have eyes other than mine. I have only common eyes; take care how you stand upon this fine point, for the mass of mankind who cannot see it at all, will say you are standing upon nothing at all." (Laughter and cheers.) Now, I say that the whole question of church endowment has with us passed into the region of theories and fine points; as a practical question it is dead and gone; nor should its old ghost now rise to frighten us. You may as well insist on a community of sentiment in regard to many other questions,—as the Revolution Settlement, the quarrel between the Protesters and the Resolutioners, which brought ruin on the Covenanters at Bothwell Brigg. If you are to start all manner of theoretical questions, you will not only prevent union between these two Churches, but you will prevent union between men and women in this world—(loud laughter)—even though the women were as fond of union as Dr Gibson's old woman. (Roars of laughter.) I heard the Germans at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in Geneva talk a great deal about individualism. I did not altogether understand what they meant by that—(laughter)—but I say, if Christians are to go and keep apart on mere theoretical questions, you will reduce the

whole Churches of Christendom to individuality—(loud laughter)—and bring us all into the condition of the most worthy, pious, able, and, as he himself thought, logical man, Dr Stewart. (Laughter.) This excellent Christian was in the position of being able to worship with no living soul but his housekeeper—(renewed laughter)—and when the worthy woman died, he was left to worship alone in this wide world. (Roars of laughter.) But suppose I had to face the question, What would you do were Government wishing you to go back to the Established Church, were the State to come to your door here, saying, “Come back on your own conditions; we will grant you all you ask?” (A very unlikely supposition!) I would be very much inclined to answer according to the Scotch fashion, asking another question—namely this, “When did the State ever do anything of the kind?” (Laughter.) I believe the State will do that when His Holiness the Pope will destroy the medal that commemorates the massacre of St Bartholomew. (Cheers.) If, however, you are inclined to push me into a corner, and insist on a direct answer; well then I am prepared to give it, and here it is—If the State offers us everything we demanded in 1843—offers us spiritual independence, the abolition of patronage, protection from the Court of Session—offers us everything we wanted, on the understanding that we return to the Establishment, the question being, “Will you unite with the Seceders or with the State?” I would prefer union with the Seceders. (Loud cheers.) And I say so for this among other reasons. I would not refuse the offer so much on account of any theoretical idea I may have, although now, as minister of Free St John’s, I may see the connexion between Church and State from a different stand-point than when I was minister of old St John’s; but I would not take it for this reason, that the States of this world are not of that character which warrants a union of Church and State, but rather in the condition which makes Paul forbid the banns, saying, “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” (Loud cheers.) Moreover, on turning up the page of history, I find the State has never kept faith with the Church in any age. Age after age, by act after act, and in spite of the most solemn obligations, they have tried to restrain and have trampled on the liberties of the Church of Christ. (Applause.) I can now walk on my own feet, and when the State comes and offers me a pair of crutches, I say to her, keep them to yourself. (Laughter and cheers.) For the moment I take the crutches, become accustomed to them, and lose the power of my own limbs, she comes, knocks the crutches from beneath me, and I am a slave at her feet. (Cheers.) Therefore I decline any such proposals. (Cheers.) But, then, why should we make anything of this matter? Our friends the United Presbyterians say, “We are willing to make this question of the relation between Church and State an open question.” And did not we make the descending obligations of the covenants an open question with the Old Lights? We left the Old Lights to hold their opinion on that point, and they left us, who did not believe in the descending obligations of the covenant, to retain ours; and on these terms we united. That is the very thing which our United Presbyterian friends propose to do. Yet one would suppose, from speeches that have been delivered to-day, that they have been asking us to give up our principles and abandon our Confession of Faith. I venture to say, from what I know of Seceders, that there are no men in Scotland or all Great Britain who will stand more true than they to the great principles of the Confession. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) Talk of the Sabbath! Fear for the Sabbath! Let me assure you that none here have done such service to the cause of the Sabbath as Dr Thomson of Edinburgh. I was present at Geneva when he read a paper before the Evangelical Alliance in favour of the sanctity of the Lord’s day, that crowned him with the highest honour, and produced an impression seldom witnessed in any assembly. (Loud cheers.) It has been said that the members of the United Presbyterian Church will, by entering into this union, virtually abandon their views about Voluntaryism. But, sir, I have known members of the United Presbyterian Church who were not Voluntaries. A man is not of necessity a Voluntary because he belongs to that Church. The United Presbyterian denomination meets no man with any question on that subject when he presents himself for admission to the communion table; nor do they test their ministers by that. I have known ministers as well

as members of the United Presbyterian body as strong for the union of Church and State as I ever was. And, on the other hand, I can tell the Moderator and Free Church ministers that many of their people are out and out Voluntaries. (Cries of "No, no," and loud cheers.) I believe the number of these will increase, and, be it right or wrong, that Voluntarism will grow in the Free Church. (Cries of "No, no," and cheers.) Hear me out—(laughter)—and I will give you the opinion of a wiser man than I am, or perhaps than any person in this House is, of one who was peculiarly distinguished for his cool, calm judgment—I mean Dr P. Macfarlane of Greenock. In 1843 I expressed my anxiety to him that nothing should be done that might hereafter hinder a union between us and the United Presbyterians. Reading the history of other Churches, I had found that the Independent Church, when they were thrust out by the Act of Uniformity, although they took tithes when they were in the Church, lapsed into Voluntarism; that the Secession Church, when it left the Establishment, holding all the principles that we have held, also lapsed into Voluntarism; and I said to Dr Macfarlane, I believe that you and I will carry our principles with us to the grave, but that it was probable that ascending fathers would not leave their mantle to their successors, and that in the course of time the Free Church would change as others had done. He entirely agreed with me. Let the thing be right or wrong, I say with Solomon, that that which has been is the thing which shall be; and Solomon is wiser than some gentlemen in this House. (Loud laughter and cheers.) That which has been in the Independent Church, and that which has been in the Secession Church, according to the principles of Solomon, may be looked for in the Free Church by and by. (Cries of "No, no," and cheers.) These are the teachings of history, and the moral laws which ruled in ages past will rule in those to come. It is natural, if not inevitable. When men are by any system or institution deprived of benefits which they think themselves best entitled to, they come at length to oppose the system itself, and to regard it as a cumberer of the ground. It may be that our United Presbyterian friends will yet adopt the principle of the Establishment; it may be that we shall give it up; but what I say is, that these are questions with which we have nothing to do. The question is not a practical one here. It is a mere theory. It has no other existence than as a theory; and shall we for one moment allow a theory to stand between us and such a blessed consummation as this? (Applause.) I trust not. An appeal has been made to fears about the Sustentation Fund. I am sorry for that; and I will tell you why. There were selfish appeals addressed to our ministers about their livings before the Disruption, and, to their honour, they replied, "The livings! money is not the question here; this is a matter of principle, of divine principle, of Christian duty." Such is the question here. With one Confession, one Catechism, one mode of worship, one code of discipline, one form of government, one attachment to the principles of the Disruption, one opinion as to the spiritual independence of the Church and the liberties of Christ's people, I could not but support this union; nor with these views could I oppose it, unless through pride, or passion, or prejudice. (Applause.) Now, I don't say I am above the influence of such feelings, nor are any—we are all liable to err; but I would hope and trust that this House, by the decision to which it will come, will shew that we can rise above fears connected with the union, as we rose above greater fears connected with the Disruption. (Applause.) We did a magnanimous act then; and I do not hesitate to say, that if, in seeking to unite with another Church, we shall rise above the influences of passion, and prejudice, and pride, then shall we crown ourselves with as rich and noble honours as on the day when, rising above fears for our families, parting with our livings, parting with our homes, parting with our most cherished affections, we made so great a sacrifice, not in the way of union, but of separation. That day saw faith and hope most illustriously exemplified by an act that brought to men's minds the olden times, when our forefathers went down the Bow, and sang their last Psalm in the Grassmarket, and laid down their lives for Christ's Crown and Covenant. And, Moderator, if, taking all precautions—if, proceeding deliberately, well, and wisely, we shall come to be united with our friends as one brotherhood, one Church, one in Christ and

before the world, then we shall in love illustrate a nobler grace than either Faith or Hope; and when within the walls of this House, that united Assembly shall raise the psalm which we sung to-day—

“Behold, how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well,
Together such as brethren are,
In unity to dwell”—

I can fancy Paul bending from his throne in heaven, listening to the song as to the music of the spheres, and calling to mind his own blessed sentence, “Now abideth faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these is charity.” (Loud and prolonged applause.)

Mr CUNNINGHAM, elder, from Campbelton, briefly addressed the House in support of the motion of Dr Gibson. He said that if the government of America had been based on the recognition of the Scriptures, there would have been no war. Dr Guthrie, in his speech, seemed at one time to pay great deference to the Covenants, and at another time to speak of them disrespectfully. He would ask Dr Guthrie when the Covenants lost their power, and when they ceased to be of obligation? It would be well for the Church, he thought, if they would consider whether the Covenants were not still binding upon the Church.

The Earl of KINTORE said, he thought that this was a bright and a happy spot in the history of the Church, and he would also draw the attention of the members of the United Presbyterian Church to the fact. He did not see much difference between the two motions before the House. Dr Buchanan’s motion especially pointed out that no decision should be arrived at without due regard being had to the principles of the Church; while the motion of Dr Gibson only amplified that sense, and put, as it were, a greater force upon it—a greater force it would be in one sense; and yet, before they come to the vote, he wished to say that he thought it was not a greater force. (Hear, hear.) If they were to appoint a committee to think over that great matter, and not only to think over it, but to discuss it frankly, fairly, and fully with their brethren of the United Presbyterian Church, he thought they should let that committee go to a conference unhampered with any caveats. (Hear, hear, and applause.) They all loved the Free Church; and it was the comfort of them all that they belonged to a “canny race.” They had come to nothing definite as yet. They were only in the position of two parties—say a man and an intended bride—looking at one another. Did they mean to say that the man and his intended bride made a union on the spot when they first met? No; they looked at one another, and took time to know one another better, and to consider whether it would be for their mutual advantage that a union should take place between them. God grant that in a holier and a higher sense, when they went to discuss this question with their brethren, His Spirit might be with them in looking to one another, and consulting with one another; that they should be so much pleased with their mutual looks, that from looks they should desire better things; and having at present one Lord, and one baptism, and one communion, and one on all major points, God grant that the day might come when they might also be one Church, holding by their one common Lord. (Applause.)

Rev. Mr BALFOUR, Holyrood, said, with all deference to the Earl of Kintore, he (Mr Balfour) thought there was a difference between the two motions, when taken in connexion with the speeches by which they had been supported, which was very perceptible and important. We had heard a great deal of the difficulties that stand in the way of this union; and it had been the aim and drift of the speeches in support of the first motion to shew that there were substantially no difficulties in the way at all—or that the difficulties were so small and imperceptible that, as Dr Guthrie told them, they came to so small a point that the people would have difficulty in knowing that they had a point to stand upon at all. Now, in the opinion of those who supported the second motion, there was a very important difference between this Church and the United Presbyterian

body. He (Mr Balfour) agreed entirely with all that had been said in regard to the spirit manifested by the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, and as to the desirableness of this union, provided it could be secured on the basis of true scriptural principles; but he thought the speeches that had been uttered in connexion with the first motion just shewed this—that there was great danger of them (the Free Church) giving up their distinctive principles. (No, no.) If there was no such danger, what was the meaning of all this discussion? Why was it that the other side were not prepared to adopt Dr Gibson's motion? If that motion was that they were to add to Dr Buchanan's motion that the committee to be appointed should have a due regard to the *maintenance in the integrity* of the principles of the Church, what objection could there be to this, unless it be that their brethren were prepared to maintain their principles in some way, but not in their integrity? (No, no.) Well, he had only one thing to say in regard to endowments. Mr Brown, who stated the Voluntary views, told them that their Voluntary friends had now given up Voluntaryism substantially as a principle; and that the whole difficulty now turned upon the question of State endowments, with which they, (the Free Church,) as a Church, had now nothing to do, any more than their friends in the United Presbyterian Church. He (Mr Balfour) begged to differ very decidedly from Mr Brown on this matter. Was it not a fact that, as a Church, at this moment they were receiving an endowment from the State for their schools? (No.) Was it not the fact that they were receiving support from the State for their schools wherein religion was taught? And were their Voluntary friends prepared to adopt that? Would they entertain that? Was it not a fact, moreover, that they (the Free Church) were in very close communion with the Presbyterian Church in the sister island who were receiving the *regium donum*—a matter which the United Presbyterian Church had distinctly petitioned against? These were questions which brought out that the Voluntary principle, even in the aspect in which alone, as Mr Brown told us, it now presented itself to our friends, must still stand in the way of our union, as we were not prepared to disallow the duty and expediency of the State providing religious instruction to the young, nor to refuse to receive their aid in this matter; while they also shewed that in entering into conference with them in regard to union, this Church should maintain her principles with regard to that matter in all their integrity, and keep them steadily before herself, and before our friends, so that, whatever union might be formed, it might be upon the basis of these principles. But he might be allowed to say, that it was never more important, than at the present day, to maintain our principles as to the duty of the civil magistrate in regard to religion in all their length and breadth, when our rulers are so much disposed to countenance and support all kinds of religion, truth and error together, for political purposes. This was not a time when they could give up that great principle—the only principle that, in their opinion, really met the case. Dr Guthrie had told them that, for himself, he thought they were drifting away to Voluntaryism; and he almost seemed to find a sort of satisfaction in the thought. Now, if that was the tendency of things, instead of surrendering ourselves to it, and giving up our principles, it was all the more important for them of the Free Church that they held these great principles as a basis on which alone they could keep the State right in regard to religious questions—it was all the more important that they should endeavour, in entering upon these conferences, to see that they had these principles distinctly announced, that their friends might know them.

Rev. Dr MACFARLANE, Dalkeith, said he had proposed the overture on this subject in the Presbytery of Dalkeith, which had the honour of being the first of the Presbyteries of the Free Church that had the movement under their deliberation. The Presbytery were unanimous in adopting the overture, and their unanimity arose from this—that the standards of the Free Church were held to be the basis on which the union was to be accomplished. (Hear, hear.) No language was employed in that House which would lead any one to suppose that the Free Church was to compromise any part of the opinions which they held as having given in their adhesion to the Westminster Confession of Faith. He did not ex-

pect, nor did he desire, that this union should be brought about without due consideration, or without the sessions and congregations having full time to deliberate upon the matter. But all that they required to do at the present stage was to give *prima facie* evidence that the union they proposed was not accompanied with insuperable difficulties. That there were obstacles in the way he most willingly admitted; and one of the most formidable of these was that which was felt to stand at the very threshold of the question—the Voluntary principle. But that obstacle did not exist in regard to the Reformed Presbyterian Church at all. And, moreover, it was to be kept in view that the Voluntary principle was not embodied in the standards or formula of the United Presbyterian Church. (Hear, hear.) The slight modification attached by the United Presbyterian Church to the Confession of Faith was much the same as that attached in their own Church. It was this;—their ministers having expressed their acquiescence in the Confession of Faith, and in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as the formula of the Church, declare as follows:—“It being understood that you are not required to approve of anything in these documents which teaches, or is supposed to teach compulsory, persecuting, or intolerant principles.” Now the Act of the General Assembly of the Free Church of 1846 declared as follows:—“The General Assembly disclaims intolerant and persecuting principles, and does not regard the Confession of Faith, or any portion thereof, when fairly interpreted, as favouring intolerance or persecution, or consider that her office-bearers by subscribing it profess any principles inconsistent with liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment.” Now, he asked the House to look at these propositions and say, if it did not require a most microscopic eye to detect any difference between the one and the other. In fact, the difference was not detected or looked upon as very appreciable or important by the late respected Principal Cunningham, who, in the last great address he made, announced these principles, which he (Dr Macfarlane) believed contained the germ of union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church. The learned Principal spoke as follows:—“There is nothing in the Formula of the United Presbyterian Church to which I have any objection. I could sign it myself. It does not contain an assertion of Voluntaryism, and they receive the Confession of Faith just with the very same qualification and explanation which we have now introduced into our Formula.” He did not overlook the fact that many of the ministers and members of the United Presbyterian Church were what was called Voluntaries; but while there were great varieties and shades of complexion in regard to the definition of Voluntaryism, what was held by the more temperate and reasonable supporters of that principle was simply this,—“That while it is not competent for the civil magistrate to interfere with the free action of the Church, neither is it within his province, as such, to provide for the religious instruction of the people.” Now, this did not contradict, nor was it incompatible with holding the two great principles, of the duty of allegiance to God on the part of rulers, or the duty of rulers having some regard to the welfare of the Christian Church. He was no Voluntary, and was not required to give any opinion on these points at present; but he would ask any reasonable or candid man, whether there was anything here to prevent them entering into friendly or brotherly conference as to their principles with their brethren of the United Presbyterian Church. (Applause.) As a Church, it is well known that they had no endowments from the State, except in the matter of their schools; and if the revised code should be made applicable to these schools, they would have some of their schools excluded which were most in want of aid; and more especially should the endowment of their schools be made a pretext for the endowment of Popish schools and Popish chaplains, he was prepared, for one—and by and by their Church would be prepared—to relinquish these endowments altogether. (Applause.) After referring to the obstacles to the union arising from their feelings of attachment to the history of the Free Church, and the memorable circumstances accompanying their exodus, led by men than whom none are more illustrious in the ecclesiastical annals of the country, and expressing his opinion that they should so far sacrifice these feelings in order to accomplish so great an object as union with the United Presbyterian Church, Dr Macfarlane proceeded to say, that

whatever alarm there might have been previously felt as to the introduction of this question leading to discord rather than to union, had been entirely dissipated by the brotherly feeling that pervaded the recent discussion in the Presbyterian Synod. (Applause.) No one could read that discussion without seeing that there was in that Church a pervasive feeling of good-will and Christian regard to the Free Church, which, he was sure, would be, as indeed it had already been, cordially reciprocated by them that day. (Applause.) Although they had been warned from various quarters against ensnaring conferences, there was little occasion for such a warning, when they knew what the materials were which were at their disposal for such a conference. Surely, when they knew that among the members of this conference they would include such men as the author of "The Ten Years' Conflict"—(applause)—and the men who stood forth to maintain and uphold the great principle of the independence of the Church of Christ,—when they could bring to this conference such men as the venerated and reverend Principal of their College—(applause)—who stood side by side in the ten years' conflict with another champion of the great principles of the Church, whom it did not require a monumental bust to commemorate, but whose memory was enshrined in their hearts, and whose loss they all so much deplored—when they knew that they had the man among them who stood side by side with that great champion of their principles—and moreover, when they knew that they had among them a noble lord whose name was a household word in their Church, and who, better known as Fox Maule, presented their Claim of Rights in the House of Commons, and obtained a majority of the members for Scotland to support that claim—(applause)—when they had such men as these to send to a conference, they had no reason to fear that they would either be ensnared or betrayed in their principles. (Applause.) Dr Macfarlane then briefly referred to the benefits which might be expected to accrue from union, should it be formed, as he said it could only be formed, on the principles laid down in their standards, and concluded by saying, that from his lengthened period of service in the Church, he might be allowed humbly to suggest that, in conducting this momentous yet delicate negotiation, it were well to beware of a spirit of self-preference, which had often marred the unity of the Church, and to act upon the counsel applicable to Churches as well as to individuals—"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love: in honour preferring one another." (Applause.)

Sir HENRY MONCREIFF.—My entire agreement, not only with the motion of Dr Buchanan, but with every portion of his statement in support of it, would prevent me from detaining the Assembly, even for a few minutes, were it not for one feeling. I desire to shew not only my agreement with that motion and those statements, but the cordiality and earnestness of my agreement. I have seldom been more refreshed in my life than I was when I read those admirable, those well-conceived, those truly Christian speeches, which were delivered on this subject in the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church. (Applause.) I think our response to those speeches should not only be of the warmest and most brotherly kind, but should also be full of the most hopeful expectation as to the result. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I am myself full of hope. I confidently expect a satisfactory conclusion to the negotiations upon which it is proposed to enter. I know that there are difficulties. There is more than one subject on which it will take a considerable time to arrive at a sufficient understanding. I do not think that the question as to the connexion of Church and State will be the difficulty which it will take a long time to solve. Assuming the truth of the view taken by Dr Buchanan and Mr Brown, I am persuaded that there will not be found any vital difference of principle between us. But, whatever may be the difficulties in the way, I think we ought not to thrust them in the face of the overtures now made to us by the United Presbyterian Synod. There is something in the manner of doing a thing, as well as in the thing itself. (Hear, hear.) I think Dr Buchanan's motion does all that is essential in a suitable manner. I think that Dr Gibson's motion has far too warlike an aspect. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) I am not afraid of this aspect with reference to our brethren who have taken the lead in this matter in the Synod of the United Presby-

terian Church. They will understand us, I have no doubt. But I fear the aspect of Dr Gibson's motion in its effect upon the public mind. I wish that the manner of our approach to our brethren shall be as effective and as agreeable as possible. I anticipate that the difficulties in the way of union will be overcome. (Hear, hear.) I believe that we may look for the blessing of the great Head of the Church to accompany our efforts. I think the union will be of the greatest advantage to the cause of religious truth in this country, and throughout the world. (Applause.) I am not disposed to yield to Professor Gibson, or Dr Forbes, or Mr Balfour, in my attachment to the distinctive principles of our Church. But I entertain a strong persuasion that we shall find our way, through the help of God and the teaching of His Word, toward this union, without surrendering the vital principles upon which we stand. And if this result be attained, I believe it will redound to the glory of God and the welfare of the Church of Christ. (Applause.) I know well, apart from vital principles, we have difficulties of a practical kind to overcome. My impression is, that the adjustment of these will take longer time than the consideration of vital principles. I believe that there are some of our principles which we hold as founded on the Word of God, and which we can make no compromise about. I believe that there are other principles held by us, with respect to which we might allow individual liberty. I think it should be our first business to see how far we can come to an agreement upon vital principles, and then, after the settlement of that matter, to enter upon the adjustment of practical questions. Some of the objections raised by Mr Balfour might evidently be met by the allowance of liberty to individuals and congregations. I do not think it expedient, or for edification, to enter minutely into the questions which may arise. But, with reference to some of our principles, I see no difficulty in our continuing to maintain them, even when they are not absolutely vital. (Hear, hear.) Some of our principles are historical and constitutional. They relate to questions of fact. No terms of union, and no arrangements of our formula, can alter historical facts, or alter my right to maintain, as matter of fact and history, that we did not leave the Church of Scotland, although we left the connexion with the State. (Applause.) Whatever terms of union may be agreed upon, I may still maintain that we are the Church of Scotland, although I may make no attempt to enforce that opinion on the consciences of others. (Hear, hear.) But I see nothing in this to prevent union; and, therefore, I cordially support the motion of Dr Buchanan. (Applause.)

The House then adjourned till the evening.

EVENING SEDERUNT.

The Assembly met at 6.45—Dr M'Kay, Moderator—when the debate on Christian union was resumed by

General ANDERSON, who said it was almost presumptuous in him, a poor stammerer, to address the House, after the thrilling and eloquent speeches to which they had already listened; but an imperative sense of duty demanded that he should say a few words. This subject had lain very near his heart for these last twenty years, and it had been for that long period his earnest prayer that he might be spared to see the consummation of this union. (Applause.) The year immediately after the Disruption, he was appointed one of the deputies of the Presbyterian Church in England, and had the honour to proceed to Wales as the representative of that Church to the Calvinistic Methodists; and he well remembered that when, in the course of a few remarks he made in their Assembly, he unrolled the Deed of the Disruption, how both ministers and elders rose from their seats and rushed forward to feast their eyes with a sight of the lithographed signatures of the men of God attached to that deed. (Applause.) In fact, there was no keeping order in the large meeting of elders and ministers, and he was requested by the Moderator to sit down; and it was only by his assuring them that he would leave the document behind him, that he was permitted to proceed. His conviction was, that their posterity would be just as full of joy, and thanksgiving, and gratitude to the memories of those who had taken a part in the proceedings of that day, as the Methodists were on the occasion to which

he had referred. At a subsequent period, he was appointed one of a deputation to meet with their brethren of the United Secession in England. His mind was not of a logical character. He had been a practical man, he trusted, through a long life; and when he heard a great many fine theological distinctions at the conference, he remembered saying, "Well, brethren, I beseech you to think that when you come to grapple with the subject, you will be perfectly ashamed of yourselves. You see difficulties and dangers in the distance, but these will pass like shadows, and you will be ashamed for ever having contemplated them." (Applause.) His conviction was—and he felt as if he were speaking in the sight of the living God—if the two committees met, as he believed they would meet, in the spirit of prayer, of faith, and of love, that these difficulties, which loomed so formidably at a distance, would disappear, and they would be ashamed of themselves for having been so long apart. (Applause.) He could only hope that Dr Buchanan's motion would be gone into in the spirit of brotherly kindness and love. They had been anticipated by their friends of the Secession, and dare they hold back from reciprocating that kindly, fraternal affection? (Applause.) He was persuaded that the feeling of the Church would resist any other course. In some respects the eldership had been in advance of their ministers. He trusted he only spoke the feelings of his brethren in the eldership, when he said they would gladly hold up their pastors' hands, and throw their whole hearts into this union. When they saw their country lying in wickedness and abounding iniquity on every other side, was this the time for little points of distinction to keep them apart? Let them rally together as one man, with one heart and one mind, and throw themselves into the work of the Lord. When the Lord was working in their midst, was that the time for them to stand separate? He spoke to the eldership, and he asked if they dare hold back when the Lord was asking who was on His side, and who would come forth and help the work of the Lord. Let him beseech the pastors, aged men beloved in the Lord, to remember that time was fast passing away with them and him. His gray hairs reminded him that the time of his sojourn was short, and they ought not to stand aloof; they ought to act in a spirit of brotherly love and unity, and hasten on what would, when their heads were laid low, redound to the glory of God. (Applause.) The only thing he regretted in this discussion was, that they did not begin by imploring by special prayer the blessing of the Most High, and the outpouring of His Spirit. If they had, they would have been more of one heart and one mind than they now were. He trusted this meeting would be prosecuted still more and more in the spirit of love, and that no imaginary difficulties would prevent a cordial and brotherly response to their brethren of the Secession; so that ere long—it might be when his gray head was still among them—he would be permitted to appear in the Assembly, to welcome with joy these dear friends, when the two Churches would form one beloved brotherhood in Christ. (Applause.)

Rev. Mr NELSON, Greenock, was sorry to correct General Anderson in one particular, because there had been both in the House and out of it a very large measure of the spirit of prayer. They must all have been solemnised by the prayer which came from the Moderator's chair that day; and throughout the whole borders of the country, many prayers not known on earth were being registered in heaven, that the Assembly might come to a right deliverance that night. He thought the two motions were so substantially like each other, that he hoped a certain outlet would be found, so that the House might come to be of one heart and one mind. It was not for him to say how that was to be done; but he felt perfectly satisfied that it would be the greatest of all blessings to their Church, if it were possible in any way for the Assembly to arrive at one and the same deliverance before the discussion closed. (Applause.) At the same time, he thought it only fair to add, that, though substantially these two motions were one and the same, this could not be said as to the character of the speeches in their support. He had a strong impression that, when they took the first motion, and interpreted it by Dr Buchanan's speech, and the second by the speech of Professor Gibson, their duty was to support Dr Buchanan. First of all, there was a certain

suspiciousness about the very form of the second motion, which was not in keeping with their circumstances, or with Dr Buchanan's resolution, and certainly not in the very least in keeping with the speech of Dr Buchanan. They had heard from the opposite side—if they must still talk of opposite sides—about a tendency practically to give up the Disruption, and a certain portion of the Confession of Faith. He should like to know what single word fell from Dr Buchanan, or those supporting his side of the question, to justify any such inference, or give grounds for any such fear. Let them not forget who the mover of the motion was. If Dr Buchanan, after all he had done during the last quarter of a century, after writing "The Ten Years' Conflict," and after taking such a prominent part in the debates of the House, and doing so much in the public work of the Church, were to gainsay his own past history, it would be a day of evil omen for the Free Church. (Applause.) He could not possibly imagine that there was the slightest tendency in him, or others, to give up anything whatever of the Disruption, but rather that they would continue to speak of it, as their friends in the United Presbyterian Synod had themselves done, as worthy of all honour, and likely to be so regarded for many a day. If it were the case that the United Presbyterian Synod, in making the overtures they had made, had spoken disparagingly,—if they had said, "You have taken up ground which you were not entitled to do, and from which you ought to resile," the case would have been different. They were often told about Memorials of the Disruption; but he did not know a better Memorial of it than the debate in the United Presbyterian Synod. (Applause.) He believed that of all the testimonies laid on the table of the Assembly in 1843, there was not one more hearty, more worth remembering, more fitted to gladden their hearts, than the testimony made in the Synod of the sister Church. He had only to add, that if it should turn out that the members of that Church over the country were found to echo sentiments uttered in the Synod, this would prove that they had often been labouring under misconceptions and misunderstandings hitherto; and he did not see how they could not eventually shake hands as Christian brethren, and bitterly deplore the little jealousies and misgivings that had in former years prevailed between them. (Loud applause.) His second reason for supporting Dr Buchanan's motion in preference to the motion of Professor Gibson was, that they were yet only at a preliminary stage of the matter. Professor Gibson was forgetting the tentative character of the committee's work. He had no doubt that Professor Gibson would be a member of the committee—it would be very unfair were it otherwise—(hear, hear)—and if this committee did really represent the Church, he did not see what Professor Gibson had to fear. If Dr Buchanan went wrong, Professor Gibson would be there to put him right. (Laughter and cheers.) Supposing the first meeting of the committee was to be its last—that they could do nothing more than merely meet and separate—he trusted they would separate in the spirit of the half tribe of Manasseh on the one side of Jordan, and the other half tribe of Manasseh on the other side of Jordan, never forgetting that they were brethren, and truly members of one and the same tribe. Dr Forbes, who was an eminent mathematician, had spoken about the danger of dealing with the curves of railways. Yet he forgot that in the progress of engineering, it was perfectly practicable now to lay down a somewhat sharper curve than was at first deemed possible; and he believed that something of this kind could take place with perfect safety among themselves. (Cheers.) He did not intend to dwell upon the statement of principles which had been made, seeing that, after all, that was what the committee had to deal with; but he would rejoice exceedingly if the joint-committee was to take its stand upon the broad principle, that there were certain admissions and certain confessions requiring to be made on both sides. He did not well know how to speak of that which took place here this forenoon. He had many times heard supporters of the Free Church denounced as bigots and exclusives, but he trusted that those who had used such language would ponder over what was said this forenoon by Mr Brown. (Hear, hear.) If it was the case that those who were not ministers of the Church at the time of the Disruption had looked with admiration on what was done by older persons then, he was quite sure that they were not less prepared to admire exceed-

ingly what was done to-day in the spirit of most candid confession of error where there was error, and in the spirit of desiring to avoid any such misunderstanding and jealousy for the time to come. (Cheers.) He rejoiced to believe that admissions were being made on both sides. The admission which had been made on their side was, that in the discussion of the Voluntary controversy thirty years ago, there was an underrating of the power of Christian liberality. That had been said over and over again, so that there was no necessity for referring to it further—only he trusted that no one would think that was a small admission which was being made. It was not for him to say whether their friends of the United Presbyterian Church had any confession to make or not. He knew that there were some in this Assembly who had no confession to make—(laughter)—and it might be that, when they went to the committee of the United Presbyterian Church, they might take up that position, and say that they had no confession to make either. He could not judge of that, but there was one thing he could do—namely, to look at the tendency of things since the period of the Voluntary controversy, and see whether there were any indications of such being made, or rather of such confessions having been made already. He held a proof of it in his hand. He referred to one who took a leading part in that controversy—whose name had been mentioned over and over again this day, Dr Wardlaw! (Hear.) In Dr Alexander's Life of Dr Wardlaw, (pp. 384–386,) he stated that the position to which Dr Wardlaw came in discussing the Voluntary question was—that in regard to religion, “the true and legitimate province of the magistrate was to have no province at all.” Then came the statement of Dr Alexander, which he interpreted somewhat in the light of a confession. In reviewing Dr Wardlaw's opinion, he says, “The only secure and consistent line of argument is to be that of those who admit that the magistrate, as such, *has* to do with religion—who, on the ground of this, summon him to the Bible, that he may learn there what true religion is, and what he may legitimately do with regard to its interests—who admit his obligations to provide for the moral and religious education of the community; but who stipulate that, as in this the Bible is his authority, so he shall scrupulously refrain from infringing on any of its prescriptions, or on any of the rights conferred by it on the people of Christ, in the scheme and apparatus of religious education he sets to work.” He looked upon such a statement of opinion as this as a common ground on which this committee might meet. He granted that, on the ground taken up by Dr Wardlaw, there could be no union whatever, because in that case they would be obliged to satisfy themselves, not by giving an explanation of the twenty-third chapter of the Confession, as both Churches did, but by striking it out altogether,—and then some statements by Dr Forbes would be pre-eminently true. He never could understand, on Dr Wardlaw's theory, how the Queen could take her coronation oath as the head of a Protestant nation; or how witnesses in our courts of justice could be made to swear by the judgment to come as to their telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—or how, in Government schools, the children could be plied with all the motives of God's law and Christ's love. He believed that there would be an utter dislocation of the scheme of government, and they would want entirely those sanctions to which the Bible made its appeal, when it told us what a nation was, and what it should be. But he had no difficulty with regard to the ground taken by Dr Alexander; for this reason, that while, of course, he gave up the whole question of Establishments, he conserved everything which the Free Church desired to conserve with regard to the religious character of the State, as such, and with regard to the multitude of religious things with which they believed a State had got to do. Therefore he said that if there was any meeting-place on such a ground as that taken up by Dr Alexander, the question they were now discussing would soon come to a happy and blessed issue. He was obliged to refer to a statement made by Dr Guthrie, because, to a certain extent, he could not altogether agree with what Dr Guthrie had said. (Hear.) They had been making confessions and admissions, and he thought perhaps Dr Guthrie was admitting too much—more, perhaps, than, on a right view of the case, he would be disposed to admit. (Hear, hear.) He did not know exactly what it was that Dr Guthrie

meant to declare. He would refer to it by way of illustration. He happened several years ago to be across the Atlantic for a short time, and he often put the question, as he had no doubt Dr Begg had done, to ministers there—from Dr Hodge and Dr Cheever downwards—as to their views on this whole Voluntary question. Although the case of America was so often referred to by their friends of the United Presbyterian Church in this discussion thirty years ago, he stood there to say that he did not remember of having met one minister in America who took up the position of Dr Wardlaw, but he had met multitudes who took up the position of Dr Alexander. (Cheers.) He hoped accordingly that Dr Guthrie meant that they were becoming Voluntaries only with regard to the practical question of endowments, and no further. (Cheers.)

Dr GUTHRIE—I may have expressed myself obscurely, but I think some people in the House seem to be what they call “thick in the clear.” (Laughter and cheers.) I never meant anything else. I intend to live and die with the principles I have always held; but I endeavoured to shew, from the run of history, that the natural effect of wrongfully thrusting people out of an Establishment, and bestowing its benefits on those who had not the best claim to them, was to lead people to take up a position hostile to Church endowments. (Hear, hear, and cheers.)

Mr NELSON said his object had been served by drawing forth this admission from Dr Guthrie; and he trusted that outside no use would be made of what Dr Guthrie said this forenoon, without the explanation which had just been put upon it. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) He went on to say, that he could not tell what admissions might be made in the United Presbyterian Synod; but it did seem very strange that one should hear in other parts of the world of those who were members of the Synod before they went elsewhere, who certainly were holding opinions now about which there could be, on the part of this Church, no difficulty and no difference whatever. He was not aware what was the exact history of the Halifax union; but he would like to know how it was that those who must have left this country as members of the United Presbyterian Church, having crossed the Atlantic, were able to unite there as cordially as they did without any sacrifice of principle, and in a way that he believed would satisfy Professor Gibson himself. It was no matter to him what the exact history of that case was, because it was quite plain that, if the members of that Church had come to occupy the position of union with other Churches, it was worth while trying to find out whether their friends of the United Presbyterian Church in this country might not in like manner occupy the same position; so that they might meet and join hands as members of one Church. They were surely bound to inquire into such things, and find out what the true state of the case was. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) He thought there was just one other consideration that they need keep specially before them, and it was a serious one indeed—viz., that their friends of the United Presbyterian Church ought to remember that, in desiring a meeting with them, they of the Free Church occupied a position that was certainly somewhat delicate and somewhat difficult. One could not look at the case at all without seeing that the difficulty lay far more with the Free Church than with them. He presumed that would be granted at once. He rejoiced to find that their friends, in the beginning of this matter, so far from finding fault with anything the Free Church had been in the habit of saying about the Disruption, were cordially joining with them in such allusions. But, farther, he believed there was a kind of broad historical sympathy to which they could make their appeal in this whole matter. He was not sure that he agreed altogether with some things that had been said by some eminent ministers of their own Church, in the way of their claiming more of that historical ground of the past than they could claim. He meant that, although there were certain differences between them of the United Presbyterian, and between them and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, still there was a common inheritance that they all had from the past. They were all the descendants of the noble and honoured men to whom reference had been made so often in this discussion. He believed that, on the platform of that broad historical sympathy, they could connect the Church of the future with the Church of the past, so that if this union was to take place, they could still rejoice together in speaking about the Scotland of the past, and hope that the Scotland of the future would

make full use of the legacy and heritage that had come down to them from their fathers. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) He said this, not because he loved the Free Church the less, but because he loved their common country the more. He said it because, whilst looking south of the Tweed, he found there a Church that professed to be one, but, in Christ's eye, was most certainly not one, however much it might present an imposing and seemingly unbroken front. It would be a glorious thing in Scotland, whilst these things were happening in England, to have the very opposite spectacle presented, and the very opposite result brought out, of a Church which, while apparently divided hitherto into several sections, was still one in spirit and doctrine—one not only in the eyes of men, but also in the eyes of Christ. (Cheers.)

Dr BEGG said—After the full and interesting discussion which has taken place, it is somewhat difficult to know to what point to direct the special attention of the General Assembly. I shall endeavour to avoid, as far as possible, what has been stated already, and direct the attention of the House, for a very short time, to some considerations connected both with the vast importance of the object at which we are aiming, and the real difficulty by which the question, at this stage at least, is encompassed. I do this before indicating the course which I think the Assembly ought to take in reference to the proposals which are now on our table. In the first place it occurs to me that the real magnitude of the proposal has been somewhat lost sight of in the course of the discussion. It was natural that the union of the Free Church with so large a body in our country as the United Presbyterian Church, should occupy a main share of our consideration in such a discussion; but the real proposal is a much wider one even than that. It is, that there should be a union of all the unendowed Presbyterians in Scotland, and that also in connexion with a wider union still—namely, the union of the Presbyterians in the three kingdoms,—in fact, an approximation, under a different form, and in other circumstances, to the grand idea of our great Alexander Henderson, more than two centuries ago. That is the real object set before us; and it is important that we should view the question in that light, because, on the one hand, I think it would enhance our estimation of the importance of the object aimed at, and, on the other hand, lead us to set ourselves with more earnestness to solve, if possible, the difficulties which appear on the threshold of the question. The advantages which would spring from such a union are manifest. The very union itself, apart from the great spiritual aspects of it, could not fail to have a most beneficial influence in reference to the question of Presbyterianism itself; for one of the things which no doubt prejudices many against this system, which I believe to be the system of the Word of God, is just the constant tendency which it has manifested to split itself into manifold divisions. If we could heal, by the Divine blessing, those divisions, and present a united front, in connexion with a common creed and a well-ordered system of government, co-extensive with the United Kingdom, it would not only be a grand thing in a spiritual point of view, and a great means of strength, but it would go far to silence plausible objections which men make to the system of Presbyterianism altogether. Moreover, although I concur with Dr Buchanan that we must not study any mere political object, any question of mere strength of denomination, for its own sake, we must never forget that the influence of union for good is not only a thing to be aimed at in itself, but it is a thing which may be turned to vast account for the cause of Christ, especially in the peculiar circumstances in which our country is placed. No one can advert to the undoubted fact of the sunken masses of our country, of infidel and Popish progress on every side, of innumerable evils which have sprung up in connexion with the divisions of the past, and which, to some extent, have made Scotland, sinking in ignorance and vice, a byword and a proverb,—I say none can advert to those considerations for a moment without seeing that such a union as is contemplated, if established upon a right basis, and worked with a view to the glory of Christ, might be eminently instrumental in building up the old waste places, the desolations of many generations. (Cheers.) Moreover, it appears to me that specific advantages would result from this union in reference even to our own Church, provided the initial

difficulties could be overcome. Our friends have solved problems which we have not yet been able fully to solve. I think in some aspects of the training of men for the ministry they have outstripped us. I think in the distribution of their probationers—(applause from the students' gallery)—they have solved a problem which we have not yet been able to solve. In reading the proceedings of the United Presbyterian Synod, I was delighted to observe the place which they assign to Sabbath-schools under the surveillance of their kirk-sessions, the distinctive place which they gave to the preaching of the gospel by the licentiates of the Church; and in short, I observed in several of their arrangements improvements upon the system which prevails with us; so that I believe, by this union, if it could be established, the very greatest advantages might be secured to our common Presbyterianism and to the world. But then, of course, the question arises, Can it be brought about in such a way as to conserve our principles, not because they are our principles, but in so far as they are the principles of the Word of God, which we cannot surrender, and which must continue in the Word of God even if we were unfaithful enough to surrender them? (Hear, hear.) In reference to that vital question, I wish to say, in the first place, that I have been greatly pleased with some of the explanations which have been made. I know it is a perfectly common thing to imagine that our previous struggle, in which I took a part myself, was the struggle of men connected with an Establishment, and who were fighting simply for their own position—fighting for their manse, their glebe, and their stipends; but now that all these things have been removed, some suppose it must necessarily follow that the whole controversy, in so far as we are concerned, is at an end; and because, in the wonderful providence of God, we have been able to raise, not ten times as much, as was said to-day, but five-and-thirty times as much, every year since the Disruption, as Dr Chalmers asked from the State for the endowment of our chapels—because of that it has been plausibly assumed that we have abandoned that great principle of the duty of the civil magistrate to promote the cause of Christ—to promote the cause of Christ, it may be, not by actual donations of money to the Church, but still to promote the cause of Christ in a legitimate way, it being his duty not only as a man, but as a magistrate, with all the influence placed at his disposal, to promote and advance the glory of God. (Hear, hear.) Now, it is notorious to any one who has looked narrowly at the question, not only that that inference is not legitimate, but that we have been in the habit of holding that the very comprehensiveness of our principles, the very scriptural nature of our principles, must be regarded as one cause, and one of the main causes, of the vast stream of liberality with which it has pleased God to honour and bless our Church. (Applause.) It is a more comprehensive view of human duty and of Christian liberality, and more fitted to secure the Divine blessing, not only to maintain the duty of the man, but also to maintain the duty of the magistrate—not only to hold that private men must give for the cause of Christ, and use all their influence to advance it in a legitimate way, but that all men, in all circumstances, and by the use of all influence, being the servants of Christ, are bound, and can never be set free by man from the obligation, to consecrate their all to the advancement of His cause. (Loud applause.) The very liberality of our people is, in my opinion, largely to be traced to this. They are liberal, not because they hold, but because they disown the abstract theory of Voluntaryism. Now, it is no doubt alleged to-day, that it has been found that the opposite result has followed in past history, that men disestablished have always become Voluntaries. I am not exactly aware to what history reference is made, but even if it were so, of course it will be admitted—it was admitted—that that fact would not constitute the result to be right. But my reading of history is somewhat different. Our ancestors were expelled by the civil power, in 1662, from the Establishment, and for twenty-eight years a bloody persecution drove them to the hillsides—drove them to the scaffold and to the stake. Well, then, at the end of that period no doubt they protested against what they reckoned the ungodly application of the civil power, but they came out of the struggle maintaining in the highest form what we call the duty of the civil magistrate—(applause)—holding in their hand aloft the Covenant, unfurling the flag of the covenant-

ing Reformation on the mountain tops of Scotland—(loud applause)—so that it has been alleged that a sight of that flag was one immediate cause of the great Revolution which, instead of denying these principles, affirmed them, and incorporated them with the law of the land again. (Applause.) And then if you will take the history of our excellent friends in the United Presbyterian Church, you will find that, whatever may have been stated in public assemblies,—whatever may be held by any number of individuals,—the Testimony which they issued nearly a century after they left the Established Church contains the very principles which we hold. Allow me to read this most valuable and important document. It is the 12th chapter of the Testimony of the United Associate Synod of the Secession Church, issued in 1827, and is as follows:—

“XII. *Concerning the Relations of Church and State.*—Receiving the doctrine of the Confession of Faith relative to the power of the civil magistrate, in chap. xx., sec. 4; xxiii., sec. 3; and xxxi., sec. 2, with the same limitations with which it was received by the Church of Scotland, Act of Assembly, August 27, 1647, session 23; and according to the Act of the General Associate Synod in April 1796; and of the Preamble sanctioned by the Associate Synod in April 1797; and without entering into any litigated point, which cannot at present affect the interests of religion, we judge the statement of the following propositions a sufficient expression of our views and testimony against mistakes on the subject of this article. 1. Religion, abstractly viewed, is essential to the well-being of society, and to the efficient exercise of civil government, and is therefore the concern of legislators and civil rulers, as well as of all others, in their several situations. 2. The Christian religion, as might be expected from its divine origin and intended universality, is the best calculated for promoting the interests of civil society, and therefore deserves the countenance of the civil powers. As it is their own interest and duty to embrace it, so they ought to favour its introduction among their subjects. And where it is introduced, it ought to have the control which belongs to it over the formation of laws, the administration of justice, the swearing of oaths, and other matters of civil jurisdiction. 3. But the countenance to be given to it must not be inconsistent with its own spirit and enactments. It must not be introduced or propagated by force. It disclaims and prohibits all persecution. 4. The Church and the State are entirely distinct, capable of existing without the slightest intrusive interference with the proper province of each, and ought not so to interfere. Erastian supremacy of the State over the Church, and antichristian domination of the Church over the State, and all schemes of connexion tending to either, ought to be avoided. The Church has a spiritual authority over such of the subjects and rulers of earthly kingdoms as are in her communion, and the civil powers have the same secular authority over the members and office-bearers of the Church as over the rest of their subjects. But the Church has no power over earthly kingdoms in their collective and civil capacity, nor have they any power over her as a Church. 5. The Church and the State owe mutual duties to each other, and, acting according to their sphere, may be signally subservient to each other's welfare. As many of these duties must arise from circumstances, and be regulated by them, there is no call to determine them minutely in such a document as this. 6. It is the duty of all Christians to be subject to the powers that be; as ordained of God, for a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well. ‘Fear God—honour the King.’ 7. Liberty of conscience ought to be protected by the civil power; but protection cannot be claimed in behalf of principles or practices obviously hurtful to the interests of civil society, and still less in behalf of those which would subvert its existence.”

Had our Disruption happened in the year 1823 instead of 1843, I do not see why there might not have been an immediate union upon such a basis as this—(hear, hear)—and the real question now is, Will there be any difficulty in getting principles similar to those recognised by all the parties in this projected union? For, you observe, it is of great importance, in my mind, that the union should embrace all the parties. For my part, I am most willing to admit, on the one side, to those who are strong in reference to the inexpediency, or, if they will, unlawfulness,

although I never can hold that view myself, of the State upholding the Church by endowments,—I think we may readily admit that we have come to the very threshold of the time, if the time has not actually arrived, when, instead of accepting endowments from the State, we shall be bound in self-defence, and as a duty to the Government, to proclaim that it is their duty, rather than support Baal with one hand, and pretend to support Christ with the other—(loud applause)—and in that way to serve themselves heirs to the sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who taught Israel to sin,—I say the time seems to me to have almost, if not entirely arrived, when we may join with the most earnest Voluntaries, though on different grounds, in proclaiming to the State that it is both sinful and fitted to bring down the judgment of God to be thus tampering with truth and falsehood alike. (Continued applause.) A thousand times rather abolish and sweep away all endowments together. It is teaching the people to treat with indifference the great realities of eternity—(applause)—and to treat them as unholy things, which is one of the greatest sins of which a nation can be guilty. (Prolonged applause.) But, then, in the very discharge of this duty, it seems to me essential that we should hold our principles. (Hear, hear.) I feel that, as an individual, I should testify all the more sternly against the open sins of the State in this matter, because I hold it to be the State's duty to adopt the Word of God as its supreme rule. If I am to imitate the conduct of Elijah, and demand that the altars of Baal in our land shall be torn down, I feel that my great power is gone unless I maintain that the civil magistrate is bound to acknowledge the glorious and supreme authority of the Lord God of Elijah. (Great applause.) Then, on the other hand, it seems to me that we have nearly arrived at the threshold of the time when something like the old Covenant will become necessary, and thus meet also our friends on the other side. Setting aside the question of disinterring the old Covenants,—let them repose in honour, they served their purpose, and if the men that made them were now alive, they would admit that these old, venerable Covenants served their purpose; but they would be prepared to join with us, I have no doubt, if these threatening aspects of the times continue, in banding together again, hand in hand, and shoulder to shoulder, under a new Covenant to maintain the cause of Christ against the threatened approach of a tide of evil. Well, then, but these are not the only grounds upon which I reckon it most vital, apart altogether from any question of opinion, to maintain the duty of the civil magistrate in regard to religion. We were in the habit of maintaining formerly, in the first place, that the magistrate could not be neutral in the matter of religion, that the great principle which our blessed Lord lays down—"He that is not with me is against me; he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad"—applies as much to magistrates as to other men—(hear, hear)—that your only security for having the civil magistrate on the side of what is right is to proclaim that it is his duty not to be indifferent, but to take the Word of God as his guide—(hear, hear)—and to make that the rule of his public as well as his private conduct. (Applause.) What have we seen? We have seen the civil magistrate certainly refuse emphatically enough to support the truth of God, and we have had much public boasting of this and of what has taken place since our Disruption. No doubt in one aspect of it the hearts of Christian men may well be assured by what God has honoured this Church and other Churches to do; but the civil magistrate has not become a Voluntary, for, contemporaneously with his rejection of the cause of truth, we have witnessed a spectacle which may well fill our hearts with alarm—namely, that the magistrate who threw down our claim contemptuously and allowed the ark of God to fall in the street, if I may so speak,—which was taken up by the strong hands and stalwart hearts of the Christian people of Scotland, and has been borne aloft,—the same magistrate has ever since been supporting and countenancing a system of falsehood, so that the system of falsehood now receives upwards of L. 300,000 a-year from the British Exchequer; a sum continually increasing. (Applause.) There is a proof, an undeniable proof, of the truth of our position—namely, that the magistrate cannot and will not be neutral—(hear, hear)—if he is not on the side of Christ, he will immediately go over to the side of Antichrist, and hence the absolute necessity of our great principle. (Hear, hear, and applause.) But there is another

most important view, which was partly stated in the former part of the day, but I think it right to allude to it for an instant—namely, that your only security for toleration is to get the magistrate on the side of God and of truth. Look at Spain, look at every Romish country, look at most heathen countries and infidel countries, and you will see the proof of the statement. And what security can one have, what security have we been found to possess against attempted rude encroachments already, and still more rude encroachments threatened, even to the extent of hinting that it is a breach of the privilege of Parliament to tell the people of the danger of advancing Romanism, if the magistrate is not bound by the Word of God? (Applause.) Matters will probably soon advance in this direction, and bring out this point more clearly; but have we not seen enough to indicate the truth of the proposition, that to stand on the ground that the civil magistrate is not only entitled, but is bound, to be on the side of Christ, is your grand palladium and security for civil and religious liberty? (Applause.) Men talk glibly about religious liberty, but I always find, and I could give some very instructive illustrations of the fact, that whenever you have a mere secular man talking about liberty, the moment he applies himself to a religious question he contrives always to find some reason for going in the teeth of his own principles, and in opposition to the cause of Christ; and by and by, unless we band together, and, by the Divine blessing, are enabled to make a common stand, we may find this a far more serious evil than any one at present dreams. I have just one other remark to make on this—namely, our position is almost unique in the world. So far as I know, unless it be the Irish Presbyterian Church, I do not know where you will find a Church maintaining a united and complete testimony in regard, on the one hand, to the liberty of Christ's people; on the other hand, to the Headship of Christ over the Church; and, in the third place, to the Headship of Christ over the nations—all the more important because we have no State connexion. If we in the slightest degree compromise—I do not mean the circumstantial, but the vitals, and those great principles for which we have struggled and suffered so much—the lights would go out, as it were, in the world. Those who interpret prophecy speak of the approach of the time when darkness shall again cover not only the world but the Church; that is to say, when there shall be a cessation, as it were, of the complete testimony for Christ's truth and Headship for a period. Now, of course I know that our respected brethren do not wish to bring about any such result, but it seems to me that in the threshold of this conference, and knowing the strong views held on this subject by two parties that have been scarcely referred to to-day, and knowing that these views are still embodied in a document which I suppose is regarded with respect at least by the great mass of the third party, whilst it forms a vital part of our own testimony in behalf of the truths of God, it seems to me in these circumstances all-important that we should understand what Mr Brown so powerfully expounded to-day, that whatever you do with the question of endowments, and with any other of those mere circumstantial and unimportant questions, the vital principle itself must be held. (Applause.) And for one I am prepared to say that, earnestly as I desire union, and much as I am prepared to sacrifice for it, I would rather be a minister of the smallest Church in Christendom, holding a full testimony for Christ, than I would be a minister of the largest union that ever was formed or conceived, if there is anything like a sacrifice of principle involved. (Applause.) At the same time, whilst I feel constrained to say so much in honesty, I would repeat again that there is no man in this Assembly more deeply convinced of the vast importance of the object at which we are aiming. It would, indeed, be a grand day for Scotland if the scattered members of the Presbyterian Church, driven out by repeated forms of persecution—if long-scattered portions of a common family could unite together on a common sound basis, and thus not only endeavour, by the Divine blessing, to fill Scotland with the light of truth, and with the glory of regenerated spiritual life, but to set up an ensign, a lighthouse of truth, as it were, to which the eyes of the nations sitting in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death might be turned. I set aside all the mere questions of detail. Whatever difficulties might appear at first, I am pretty sure we

could agree about our Sustentation Fund. (Loud applause.) My impression is, that there is a grandeur about that fund, and a practical advantage connected with its administration, that would win the hearts of our brethren if they came amongst us. (Hear.) I have no fear for any of these details at all; but the question of principle being settled, I would glory in the result. It was reckoned a grand thing to see the army of France and the solid squares of Britain fighting together on a common field, after they had so long fought against each other; and it would be a glorious thing, after all our battles, it would be a grand thing if we could now lay down our arms, in so far as our mutual contests are concerned, but be prepared in the full panoply of truth, and terrible as an army with banners, to carry battle against the common foe. It would fill the hearts of thousands with ecstacy and delight; and now that unions have been formed among Presbyterians of distant lands, I agree with those who think that although we must look at all difficulties, and assure our people outside that there will and can be no unworthy compromise—for many of them are trembling lest we should compromise those principles (applause) for which they have sacrificed and suffered so much—union upon a right basis ought to be aimed at both on the ground of duty and expediency. We need not despair of ultimately, by the Divine blessing, bringing about a union, and it may be more speedily than any of us may anticipate; because, I think, external events will hasten forward this union. I do not anticipate anything like impossibility in getting these questions adjusted; but, as I told some of our respected brethren on the other side, they will be adjusted all the more readily if we begin by seeing them, acknowledging them, and facing them. (Applause.) There must be no undue haste or unseemly precipitancy in forcing questions to an adjustment; but if we adjust them, and if we could meet in a few years, in this hall, or some similar place, to complete the grand union—and if proclamation went forth, not only to the enemies of truth in this land—for I am sure that no tidings would fill the hearts of many of the enemies of truth with more alarm—but if these tidings could so go out to the world's end as that the very outgoings of the morning and evening were to rejoice over them, it would be one of the grandest days for Scotland, for Scotland's scattered sons—one of the grandest days for the world. I have just now to say what I have most respectfully to propose. I hope that my excellent friend, Professor Gibson, satisfied with eliciting full statements of our principles in this house, will withdraw his amendment—(loud and continued applause)—and that we shall even in this respect outdo our excellent friends. (Hear, hear.) We may be stiffer in points of principle, but they must not be allowed to outdo us in courtesy at the commencement of this important negotiation. I hope we shall be unanimous. The Rev. Doctor sat down amidst loud applause.

Mr MACGREGOR, Paisley, said—It is the wish of some of our friends from Paisley that I should address you on behalf of them. As it is one purpose of this meeting, for the instruction of the country, and the guidance of the committee which I hope to see appointed, to bring out the mind of the Church as a whole, and as we have already heard many D.D.'s from Edinburgh and Glasgow, it is desirable that members of Assembly from other parts of the country should now be heard. Paisley should be specially represented in the discussion, because it is well known Paisley has taken a very special part in bringing the discussion about. I would ill represent my friends there if I were to make any pretensions on their behalf to your peculiar admiration. But as they have been somewhat taken to task for what they have said and done, it is right that their sayings and doings in the matter should at least be faithfully represented. I can represent them the more freely, because I can claim no credit for them, being as yet almost a stranger in Paisley.

In order to a union such as we contemplate there is need of two things: the Churches must be one in principle and they must be one in heart. Suppose that the proposed committee find or bring about a unity in principle, yet if the members of the Churches be not one in heart there can be no incorporating union which is not a hollow truce instead of a solid peace. Now it is well known, at least to us ministers, that not a few of our people have not this heart-prepara-

tion for union, but are the victims of a coldness, or prejudice, if not a positive aversion to their Christian brethren of the United Presbyterian Church, such as must render a real union, so far as their influence extends, a hopeless impossibility. And our Paisley proceedings have been fitted and intended for the purpose, and, by the blessing of God, they have accomplished the purpose, at least of bringing the mass of our ministers, office-bearers, and people, to a footing of intimacy and cordial brotherly affection. We have held monthly and quarterly meetings, of ministers, elders, office-bearers in general, and church-members, for united prayer, meditation on God's Word, and stimulation in God's work. We have realised what Dr Guthrie has been looking and longing for—a united effort in home evangelisation; the conference has mapped out the town into home-missionary districts, allotting a district to each congregation; and the home-mission work is one studied subject of conversation and prayer at our meetings. And in this way, I humbly submit, we have not in the least usurped the functions or intruded on the province of church-courts; but, in the exercise of our due personal liberty as Christians, have set a good example, not only of union in the form of co-operation, but also of preparing our hearts for the proposed union in the form of amalgamation. If your committee should find that the Churches are otherwise ripe for this union, in Paisley at least there is no serious obstacle in the shape of alienation of heart.

Of the two motions before the House, I prefer Dr Buchanan's, because it is best fitted to attain the avowed purpose of both. It really embraces all that is contained in the appendix proposed by our respected father Professor Gibson. But it maintains it in an inoffensive form. However inoffensive in itself, the appendix becomes offensive by its circumstances; viewed in the light of its origin, and of its advocacy to-day, it must be regarded as conveying some suspicion, either of the committee, or of our United Presbyterian friends. So far it must tend to retard, instead of forwarding, a union, though that union should be in itself most desirable. It is, in effect, a motion that no committee be now appointed. And sympathising as I do, most strongly, with the purpose of those who desire a committee, I would rather vote for appointing no committee this year than vote for an appointment clogged by that offensive caution. The former would only tend to delay the union; the latter directly tends to prevent it.

As to the substance of the motions, you will notice that what we ask is, not a union at once, but an inquiry with a view to union. Dr Buchanan does not bid us now resolve to unite with the United Presbyterian Church. He does not bid us declare that we are now ripe for a union. If he had done so, I for one would not have supported his motion. I am not prepared this evening to say that we are now ripe and ready for a union. But I am prepared to say that we are ripe for inquiry. There is manifest reason sufficient to justify and recommend inquiry. There is *prima facie* evidence of our being, probably, or possibly, ripe for a union. There is evident reason to hope that we are one, or may, by the blessing of God and suitable means, come to be one; so that a safe and honourable, a really Christian union, doing violence to the conscience of none, giving free and full scope to the affections of all, may be accomplished. And if this be possible, it is obligatory. If it can be without sin, we cannot without sin remain separate. The consummation is devoutly to be hoped for, to be prayed and worked for, by Christian men. For wherever there is a real inward unity, a visible Christian union is not only the natural and easy result, but a result which we are bound to seek and obtain. We are bound to seek it and obtain it in order to display the nature of our religion, the effect of the gospel, of the blood and spirit of Christ, in making men one; giving them one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one life, one light, one love. We are doubly bound by regard to the Church's grand mission, to evangelise the world, not only by the silent preaching of her life, but by the articulate preaching of her lips. Of this, an illustration occurs to my mind. In a district of country well known to me, with a population of some 3000 souls, there are no fewer than eight Presbyterian churches within half-an-hour's walk. Here, through disunion, there is an enormous waste of working power, and elsewhere there is a want corresponding to the waste. For example,

in Glasgow, it is calculated there are some 200,000 people who could not find sitting-room nor standing-room though all our churches were crammed to the door. But on the obligation to union, and the advantages of union, when practicable, it is useless to enlarge.

Nor need I speak of the principles on which a really Christian union ought to be sought, and may be expected, in the case now before us. Before coming to the Assembly, I had made this, for my own guidance, a matter of special study. But in the very noble speeches of Dr Buchanan and Mr Brown it has been so admirably handled that nothing remains to be said upon it, any speeches of mine would be utterly superfluous. I listened to both with the greatest admiration and delight. And one remark has occurred to me, which you will allow me, as a young minister, to make. In prospect of the momentous negotiations now pending, our Church has cause for much gratitude to God that we have still spared to us men like Dr Buchanan and Mr Brown, of wisdom, reverence, and power, so wonderfully preserved after so many arduous labours. I do not think that the projected union can take place very soon. But I do hope that it may take place so soon that these fathers may crown the public labours of their lives by wisely laying, on the basis of God's Word, the foundation of a union in which their children may rejoice; that the great men of the Disruption may give their practised Christian wisdom to the reconstruction of a truly national Presbyterian Church, which shall embrace all Scotland in the wise embrace of her purity and love.

The only remark which I will make on the principles of union is this, that outward amalgamation, in order to be pleasant and profitable, must be an amalgamation of parties who are inwardly one. The only union to be desired, the only union on which we may expect the blessing of God, the only union which is a union in the Lord, a really Christian union, is based upon unity of faith and love; the outward amalgamation must be the result and manifestation of this inward unity of Christians. And the question which our committee will have to consider is this, Are we really one in Christ? Have we already attained to a unity, or can we be brought to a unity of spirit, of head and heart, of thought and feeling, on all points really and vitally affecting the being and harmonious operations of a Church?

Mr A. MURRAY DUNLOP next rose, amidst applause, and said—It is with extreme gratification that I see this night what a few years ago I never expected to see—a unanimous resolution for a committee to be appointed to confer with a committee of the United Presbyterian Church on the subject of union. (Applause.) I have great confidence in my reverend friend Dr Gibson, that he will cordially act on the suggestion of Dr Begg, and withdraw the addition which he had proposed. (Applause.) A few years ago, as I have said, I had no hope of living to see this result. It is only six years since that, at the request of Sir George Sinclair, I joined with some members of this Church, and some of the United Presbyterian Church, in signing a declaration not intended as a basis of action at all, but merely to call men's minds to the subject, and to point out a general basis on which a union might be formed. When first brought to me in proof by my friend Sir George, I stated to him that, as framed, it was impossible, with my views, that I could sign it. He accordingly took it away, but in a day or two brought it back and asked me to put the main statement of principle in a shape that would satisfy me. Knowing the views of the leading American Voluntaries, I framed it in accordance with my ideas as to these, but in accordance also with what I considered the essential element of that which we had been used to call the Establishment principle. This, to my great delight, I found satisfied the leading members of the United Presbyterian Church who were invited to concur in it. Well, in these days, so little prepared were the great body of this Church for considering the subject, that my noble friend Lord Dalhousie and I came to the Assembly with the impression that we should have to defend ourselves against a vote of censure—which I supposed would, if proposed, have been carried by a large majority. (A laugh.) But the feeling in favour of union has grown from that day to this; and I rejoice that, though getting near the last

stage of life, I may yet live to see it consummated. (Hear, hear.) I saw to-day sitting among the audience my friend Mr Henderson of Park—(applause)—who is known wherever the gospel is valued, as a catholic, liberal-minded Christian, the munificent friend of all good objects. (Renewed applause.) He and I are both old and gray-headed, but I do not despair that I may yet be in an Assembly where I may see Mr Henderson, not as a visitor, but as a fellow-member. (Applause.) My excellent friend Mr Brown, in that wonderful and noble speech—so distinguished by high feeling and intellectual acuteness—pointed out the erroneous application of terms employed in our old controversy, and explained the false inferences drawn from, and the different meanings involved in, the term Voluntaryism. I wish much he would do the same service in regard to the term, "Establishment principle." (Cheers.) That term in no way described the principles for which this Church contended. It was a result, in certain circumstances, which they thought lawful, that the State should endow the Church; but as to considering their principles as in any degree necessarily connected with the establishment of the Church, nothing could be farther from their view, and nothing could give a more false notion of their principles than by so representing them. So far was this from being the case, that, for instance, being then equally as now opposed to the Irish Church Establishment, I maintained that it was the duty of the State not only not to endow it, but, on the Establishment principle, to pull it down—because, viewing the duty of the civil magistrate to promote truth, and that Establishment being an obstruction to truth, I held it to be the magistrate's duty to overthrow that Establishment. (Applause.) So far as mere endowments are concerned, I sit perfectly loose to them. The moment I found that our friends of the United Presbyterian Church were likely to adopt the general principle, that the civil magistrate, when he enters upon his office, should take with him the Word of God to regulate himself as a magistrate, as well as an individual, by that Word,—having got that principle settled,—any further difference of opinion as to the application of that principle in particular cases was comparatively of no importance. (Applause.) In the declaration which I signed six years ago, that principle was brought out quite sufficiently to satisfy me and the others who signed it. It was signed by leading men of the United Presbyterian body, and was referred to the other day in the Synod as setting forth their principles. I might be supposed to stand more rigidly upon the specific documents setting forth the distinctive principles of our Church than others; seeing I had the honour of preparing the draft of the Church's Claim of Right and the Protest. (Applause.) I feel satisfied, however, we and our friends are substantially agreed. I shall not detain the Assembly further than by again expressing my very great delight that I have lived to see this day; and I trust the Lord may yet preserve me to witness the consummation of this union. (Applause.)

Mr BURNSIDE, of Falkland, said he would have been constrained, had not circumstances taken the turn they had lately done, to vote for Dr Gibson's motion, though it would have pained him exceedingly to have subjected himself to the supposition that he had not the greatest confidence in Dr Buchanan, or that he, (Dr Buchanan,) or such as he, would compromise the interests of the Church. It was of the utmost importance, however, if there was to be a union which was to be solid and enduring, that they should take all the members of the House. He wished to say, before Dr Begg rose, that he saw no difference between them, and no use for two motions; and that it would satisfy him and others who would have voted for Dr Gibson's addition, if, when the committee is appointed, those who had spoken on the other side—Dr Gibson, Dr Forbes, Mr Balfour, and Dr Begg—were put upon it; it would give universal satisfaction, more especially after the speech of Dr Begg. (Applause and laughter.)

Dr CLASON rose to address the House with very considerable reluctance; but it had been suggested to him, that being, as he believed, the oldest minister in this Assembly, he should say a few words. He could not help referring to the high and honourable position in which the United Presbyterian Church had placed itself by acting in the kind, affectionate way it had done towards this

Church. (Applause.) As was well known, there was some thirty years ago a somewhat angry controversy between the two branches of the Church; and he dared say, it must be confessed there were hard words on their (the Free Church's) side. Their brethren had shewn they had altogether forgotten that. It was worthy of them to do so; and he hoped what had begun so prosperously would be carried out. No doubt there were difficulties to be grappled with and adjusted. He owned he had abandoned all hope of this question being settled; but he had begun to feel now, after what Mr Dunlop had said, that the great mountain had become a plain. (Hear.) At all events, they should meet each other as Christian men should do. He had the utmost confidence that any committee of this Assembly would be prepared to state the views of this Church, and would meet with such candour and kindness from the members of the other Church as would at any rate lead to very important results; and, though it might not be in his day, that they might be one as a branch of the Church of Christ, even as they were one in Christian faith. (Applause.)

Mr NIXON, Montrose, said he hoped this discussion would close in a manner worthy of its commencement. He thought in the morning, considering the singular courtesy and consideration and love with which the United Presbyterian Synod treated the question in the discussion of it, that it would be better if they would avoid any discussion at all, lest anything should be said or done that would place them in a lower position in their own eyes, or in the eyes of the Church, than their brethren occupied in the matter; but he must confess that he was now relieved, notwithstanding the differences that had come out, and he was glad, for one, that the discussion had taken place. (Applause.) He went back to the days of the apostles, and he found that in the Synod of Jerusalem, that first assembly of the Christian Church, there was much disputing. He believed there had been as much discussion there as there had been that day going on among them, and yet they came to a unanimous resolution with reference to which they could say, "It seemed good to us and the Holy Ghost." He hoped that they would be able also to come to a conclusion equally unanimous. He had long ago felt crushed in heart about the differences between their brethren and themselves, but he rejoiced to say that he had a fair prospect of living to see these differences removed, and only the great scriptural principles that ought to survive all discussions coming out as the result, and standing forth upon the page of the history of a united Church, and work more efficiently for good in this land and in the world than in time past. (Applause.) Even when they were contending with their Voluntary neighbours, they were asked why they treated them with greater respect than the Moderate party. The simple answer was, that the view they took of the Moderate party was that they were worldly in their policy, whereas, while opposed to them on the Voluntary controversy, they still regarded their Seceding brethren as Christian men, and as constituting an earnest evangelical Church. As to the desire for union, he believed that the ministers of this Church were not behind the elders in this matter, and that they had been looking forward to their union as a thing that in all likelihood would by and by take place. They had said little about it, because they knew quite well that the basis must be a doctrinal basis, and that great principles must be at the foundation of this union, if it is to be a right union; and as, from their position, it was to be supposed that they would have a very solemn sense of the value and importance of these principles, so they properly felt that they must look well to have these principles rightly established, and brought out in connexion with any union that might take place. And now as the conferences went on that would follow this discussion, he had a strong conviction that, though it might be a little time before it ended, as the bulk of the brethren wished and expected, yet the protracted conferences that might be expected to take place would, under the guidance of the Spirit, be the means of fixing the minds of their people and themselves more and more thoroughly upon the length and breadth of the questions involved. He trusted that the result would be that, if there were still slight differences existing, they would gradually vanish. And without speaking as if they would go over to the United Presbyterians, or

the United Presbyterians would come over to them, he hoped that they would both yield to the leadings of the Word and Spirit of Christ, and come to a conclusion that would be acceptable to all, and accordant with that Word. (Applause.) He had in his mind a blessed anticipation of what would take place if this union should be consummated on the great principles of the Word of God, with the Lord Jesus Christ recognised as reigning over the Church, and as reigning equally over the nations,—with His presence in the midst of them, and when throwing overboard the question of endowments, which was a mere accident connected with their great principles,—they should all be found uniting in testifying their homage to Him as King of nations, as well as King of saints. (Applause.) If they would but come to that conclusion, as he trusted they would, he anticipated, from the sanctified wealth that God had poured of late years into the coffers of the members of both the Churches, such contributions would be made by the united Churches to the maintenance of Christ's cause in this land, and its propagation throughout the earth, as should throw entirely into the shade even what they were accustomed to call the great things that the Lord had enabled both the Churches to do for His name. (Applause.) That was his anticipation; and as, from his private communings with Dr Gibson, he knew well that there was no office-bearer in the Church that was more desirous of union than he was—(applause)—he hoped that his friend would at once withdraw his motion, as he had secured its great ends, so that they might approach their brethren now in a manner corresponding with that in which they met them. (Applause.) The whole style and manner of their brethren in their communication to them implied that they could trust them. Their friends knew the principles of the Free Church, and he would never for a moment believe that they intended, desired, or expected to sap and undermine these principles. He had not the slightest doubt that, in the view of these principles, they were prepared to offer them, as time rolled on, such terms of union as they would be enabled to accept without letting themselves down in their eyes or in the eyes of the churches and of the world. Mr Nixon concluded by expressing his profound admiration of the wonderful speech of the Rev. C. J. Brown, which he thought it was worth a man's while to live to make, and which would exercise so great an influence over the Assembly and the Church as did the no less memorable statement which he made at the Convocation in 1842.

Lieutenant-Colonel DAVIDSON said he would not trespass at any length on the time of this House, but it appeared to be the wish that the opinions of all parties might meet with a free expression here. He felt he represented here one of a body who had a right to be represented in this House. He knew that there were some present who were in India when the Disruption took place, and who went along with the Free Church in separating from the State. His feelings from his childhood had been feelings of love and respect for the United Presbyterians. (Applause.) When he was a child he was brought up to look upon them as brethren in Christ. He was in the habit of sitting under their ministry as well as under the ministry of the Church to which he belonged, but he knew nothing of those great divisions that existed between them, and which occupied so much discussion when he was away in India; and since he came back, after twenty years' residence in that land, he had had warm feelings towards his old United Presbyterian friends. When in India, and when the Lord was pleased to visit him and give him a knowledge of His dear Son, the two first letters of congratulation he received from his native land were, one from a minister of the Established Church, who afterwards went with the Free Church, and the other was from a minister of the United Presbyterian Church, which was full of Christian advice suited to a young officer placed in circumstances of peculiar difficulty. But it might be supposed, when he came home to this country, he expected to see the members of these two bodies united together, if not as one body, at all events, in common action against the common enemy. He confessed he was disappointed to find that it was not so. Accustomed in India to regard as brethren all who held the great fundamental truths of Christianity, he was disappointed to find the Church of Christ broken up into so many sects at home. They might therefore imagine with what feelings

of delight he looked forward to this union. He held strong feelings, strong views, with respect to the duty of the State in regard to religion. He felt that he, as an individual, was responsible for the actions of the State. He felt when he looked back into the past, that God caused judgments to come upon the people of a nation on account of the actions of their rulers. If that was the case in the olden time, when rulers were in a manner despotic, how much more would it be the case in these days in this land, when our Government is a representative government—(applause)—when our parliament is just the parliament we make it. (Applause.) He felt he was personally responsible to God according to the amount of his influence for the actions of the State. He had strong feelings on this subject, and he believed he would hold these as long as he lived; but those feelings should never prevent him welcoming as one with them his beloved friends of the United Presbyterian Church, and of other Dissenting bodies. (Applause.)

Professor MILLER rose to give his humble testimony in favour of this proposal of union. He began by reading a brief extract from a letter which he had received that morning from Germany, from one who had ever taken a deep interest in the business of this House, and whose absence they all deplored to-night—the Earl of Dalhousie. (Loud cheers.) “Your news,” he said, speaking of this union, “I have received with great thankfulness. It gives glad tidings of peace on earth, and good-will among men, so far as our dear old Scotland is concerned. I rejoice as cordially as you can do in the perusal of the debate in the United Presbyterian Synod. The heaven is working, and the union is as certain as any future event can be. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) It will be productive of far greater results than men’s minds dream of in accomplishing it.” He believed that the feeling of the eldership was like that of the clergy in this matter; that this union, in existing circumstances, was in every point of view to be desired; that there were obstacles in the way, but that the more these were looked at, the less they appeared; and that this union, in itself so desirable, should not be marred or endangered by any immature haste. The similitude so often employed was a very fair one, that this union must be preceded more or less by a courtship, which, for certain reasons, must be prolonged for some indefinite period. There was no doubt that, were the union to be thrust forward at the present juncture, offence would be taken on the part of many estimable and good men on both sides of the question. It was just like an apple-tree in a sunny garden: some of the goodly fruit was ready and ruddy before the rest; but they would all come ripe by and by if they continued to turn their sides to the sun. They must not shake the branches too soon; and yet they must not wait too long. There were some gnarly-looking things that were not worth looking after; nay, there might be some crabs that had become grafted on the tree—(laughter and cheers)—and even though these were ready, they could do better without them; but he believed these were few. They should wait and seek for the true solar influence under which they all professed to be actuated in this great matter, and soon the harvest would be ripened. Long engagements were said to be sometimes hazardous. It might be alleged, for example, that one or other of the young people might see some one they liked better. He would like to know in what direction they could look for any Church more lovely and desirable than the United Presbyterian. (Cheers.) There might be some, indeed, among them, who had not forgotten the flavour of the flesh-pots of Egypt—over the way—but these would form a very small minority, and no hazard would be produced by delay in that direction. Then, again, it might be said that their affection might cool. Yes, if it was of the earth, earthy; but if it was in obedience to the influence of the Spirit of God that this proposed union was contemplated, then, by mutual co-operation in well-doing, and considering one another to provoke unto love and to good works, their affections would grow instead of cooling by delay. Then, again, the advantages connected with such a union would surely preponderate. They would understand one another better, would know each other’s tempers and humours, and would know how to give and to take, to bear and to forbear. (Cheers.) Do not let them irritate one another; and,

above all, let them have no concealment from one another. (Cheers.) The Free Church happened to be in the very delicate and tender position of being the party proposed to in one sense—(laughter)—and he hoped they would not pretend to be better in temper or otherwise than they really were. (Laughter.) If there were any teeth to be shewn, let them out with all that at once; and if there were any lurkings of evil temper, let them confess it, so that the other party might be the better able to meet and modify it. (Cheers.) He had told an anecdote the other day at an elders' meeting, and he would beg leave to repeat it here by way of illustration. There was a gentleman who had wooed a lady, and hearing that she was possessed of a vicious temper, he laid his plans so as to test her. Accordingly, one evening he spilled a cup of coffee upon a very fine new satin gown which she wore, and looked in her face to see how it affected her emotions; but her face remained perfectly calm and smiling, and she was the picture of gentleness itself. That night the unhappy man proposed, and was accepted—(laughter)—and nevertheless it happened that the lady turned out afterwards in her true colours of a termagant. (Loud laughter and cheers.) It fell out on one occasion, after one of those violent explosions that characterised their married state, that he said to her, "Madam, do you remember that night that I spilt the cup of coffee on your dress?" She answered, "I do." "I did it on purpose," rejoined he. "I know you did," was the answer. (A laugh.) "You are a most accomplished actress," said he; "I could not detect anything like temper manifested by you on the occasion." "True," rejoined she, "but you should have seen the mark of my teeth in the bed-post when I went up-stairs to my own room." (Loud and prolonged laughter.) Now, one advantage of a long courtship is, that all such feelings, if there be any, will come out. (Loud cheers.) In that view, he was delighted with the discussion that had taken place. He had been afraid that there would have been more teeth shewn than there had been—(laughter)—all that was to shew had been shewn, and he was very glad to find that there was in reality so very little. The obstacles to union might be looked upon in different lights by different parties, but he was persuaded these would be got over, considering that they were both actuated by one desire to see the union carried out—(cheers)—and that their object in seeking for that union was the same: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will to men." (Hear, hear.) He was of opinion that any delay that might take place ere the union was consummated, would give an opportunity to pride, prejudice, and dislike to pass away. Dr Guthrie had stated in the forenoon, that he had been brought up in early life to look favourably on Seceders; but he (Professor Miller) had been brought up in an atmosphere totally opposite to this—he was brought up to consider them as positively an inferior race of beings—(laughter)—and he had no doubt that a certain amount of that prejudice stuck to him, and to others as well, unconsciously. Not long ago, when the subject of this union was mooted, he turned towards it the cold shoulder; not that he had any good reason for doing so, but simply because some prejudice or dislike had clung to him in regard to Seceders. He did not know how it had come about, but he was happy to say that his feeling against the union had entirely passed away. And yet he did know. He believed that the feeling savoured of prejudice and pride, that it was a part of the unshedded carnal man within his heart, and he humbly hoped that it had been taken away through the influence of the Divine Spirit. He exhorted all who were possessed of similar prejudices to resist rather than obey them: under God's hand and teaching, they would be sure to disappear; and it would ultimately be found that there would be no difficulty in the matter of mere feeling in advancing this much-desired union. (Cheers.) He was not afraid of obstacles, for he thought they were in a very safe position in regard to them. They were approaching them slowly, cautiously, and with perfect appreciation of their nature. Stephenson the engineer was once proceeding along a new line at a very rapid rate, with a special railway train, when he saw a block of stone lying upon the rails in his way. On observing the obstacle, he instinctively shut off the steam; but, instantly perceiving that he could not pull up in time to avoid it, he put on all steam, dashed down upon the stone, and shivered it into a thousand atoms. To apply this, he would say,

that if there were any slight and unnecessary obstacle in the way of this union, steam would sufficiently dispose of it. On the other hand—to vary the illustration from land to sea—if there were some great obstacle, cold and hard, the love of God abounding in men's hearts would melt and overcome it. Their sea-going steamers came often within range of obstructions in the shape of mountains of ice, and the captains knew when they were nearing them by a lowering of the temperature; they gave them a wide berth, and when they came back on the same route, they found that the sun, as the season advanced, had melted the icebergs clean away. Let them in like manner await the progress of God's seasons, looking for the melting power of a summer heat, and so find not a few of the so-called obstacles in connexion with this union insensibly passing away. As to financial matters, it seemed to him, to make use once more of his matrimonial illustration, that if the parties primarily and principally concerned were properly satisfied, the thing should be allowed to go on,—(laughter,)—leaving the settlements, as usual, to the men of business. (Renewed laughter.) Surely they had plenty of lawyers in both Churches competent for the task. Well, being persuaded that obstacles would not hinder them in the accomplishment of the union if they were thoroughly dealt with, the only question was, how long were they to wait before they gained their purpose? It was said that ten years of conflict was necessary to prepare people's minds for the great exodus. Now, he would say that ten years might not be too long to contemplate a divorce, but it was too long to contemplate a union. (Loud laughter and cheers.) He, for one, would give very little for either the felicity or the fecundity of any such union. (Loud and prolonged laughter.) Let there be no undue haste, and let there be no undue delay. (Hear, hear.) Above all, let this movement be regarded as of the Lord. Plainly, He was giving them to know that He had special work for them to do. If a great commander were found concentrating his forces, it portended either that some heavy onslaught was dreaded from the foe, or that some onward movement was about to be begun, which might perhaps prove to be the very crisis and crowning effort of the campaign. (Cheers.) What was it that had been keeping Presbyterians from concentrating their strength? Was it the Spirit of God? Nay. Rather an enemy hath done this. What was it that was bringing them now into closer and closer union? Was it not the Spirit of God? Was not this movement through His Spirit speaking to men's hearts and to His Church? Let them woo that Spirit; let them obey His guidance; let them invoke His blessing; let them do everything in His name and for His cause and glory; and let them look forward anxiously to that day when thus they should be made one, not in word or in tongue only, but in truth and in very deed. (Loud applause.) To conclude with the matrimonial illustration—in reference to the solemn conclusion of the ceremony when a union has taken place, “Those whom God hath joined let no man put asunder”—might he not venture to suggest, in regard to those of their friends who might see difficulties and obstacles standing in the way of this union, that they should not magnify these too much, or adhere to these too long, but rather be willing to assent to this adjuration, “Those whom God would join let man not stand between.” (Loud applause.)

Dr CANDLISH said that, before addressing the General Assembly, he should like to know, as the discussion was drawing to a close, what was the precise position which he occupied, or rather the precise position in which the House was placed, because he thought there was an evident desire for unanimity, and he should speak with all the more freedom if these expectations were realised. (Applause.)

Professor GIBSON said,—I may state, while I could not be insensible to the appeals that have been made to me by so many friends, that it is not those appeals, much as I respect the parties who made them, but my own sense of what is right, and which sense I expressed to a respected friend of mine who walked with me to the House this evening, and who is one of the United Presbyterian brethren, that I had come to the resolution not to divide the House on this most

important question. (Loud applause.) And perhaps I may be permitted to say one word in regard to the reason that has brought me to this conclusion. Dr Buchanan knows that I expressed to him before I knew his motion, that what I was chiefly anxious about was to obtain a full discussion of the principles we maintain, and that Dr Buchanan made a motion simply for a committee as first indicated, and my rider, if you may call it so, was drawn out in reference to that announcement. (Applause.) But in the motion submitted to the House to-day, and seen by me for the first time to-day, there is this clause introduced—"Without due regard to the principles of our Church." I might have made that announcement sooner, but I felt we would not have been following the example of the United Presbyterian Church if we had proceeded to settle the business without fully allowing members of this House to express their minds. (Applause.) They came to a resolution after doing that, and we would not have been doing ourselves or them justice unless we had done the same. I have not changed a single view, but I think it would be altogether unbecoming and out of form in me to allude to anything that has been to-day stated; and I now trust that we shall be permitted, on the announcement that I make on the understanding that these words honestly express the same thing as my own motion—it would be altogether absurd in me to attempt to divide the House, or interfere with the good feeling so universally prevalent, by pressing my motion. (Loud applause.) I therefore most cordially, while rejoicing in the discussion, withdraw my rider, simply on the ground that I think it unnecessary; and may just be permitted to say, that I did not come to this discussion, more than the respected elders who have addressed us, without most earnestly considering my duty, and also asking for Divine guidance and support in its discharge. (Applause.) Professor Gibson concluded by stating that, though he conducted a rather formidable periodical of former days,—the *Church of Scotland Magazine*,—he never made the discussion of the subject turn on the question of endowment. He always, even then, repudiated that; and he did so still. (Applause.)

Dr CANDLISH—This statement of Dr Gibson's is all the more valuable because he has said it is the result of his own conviction, and not merely a concession to appeals that have been made on behalf of unanimity. (Applause.) For my own part, I would have deeply regretted if the discussion that has taken place had not occurred. I think it is for good that we have had this subject so thoroughly canvassed, and especially, I think it is for good that we have had so thoroughly brought out, I may say on all sides of this Assembly—if there are sides now—the great essential principles which we cannot consent, out of regard to any idea of greater usefulness, or any prospect of union, however hopeful, to surrender or compromise. (Applause.) And now, after this intimation of Dr Gibson, perhaps the most suitable thing would be that our discussion should be closed in the same way in which the discussion was closed in the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, by an act of devotional service. (Hear, hear.) I am entirely in the hands of the General Assembly. I am perfectly willing to let the discussion now close, without adding one single word—(Cries of "No, no")—and that we should proceed to the devotional service to which I have referred. (Cries of "Go on.") I confess that I had some desire to speak upon the subject of union to-day—(applause)—because I had no opportunity of speaking on the subject, from providential hindrances, in the inferior courts. I was all the more desirous of this, because it has been imagined that, as regards former movements in the same direction, I have been among those rather inclined to shew the cold shoulder to them, as it is said. I would just take this opportunity of saying one thing, without going back unnecessarily to past movements in this direction. Any hesitation I felt in regard to these movements did not arise either from indifference as to the object in view, or from any conviction that the object was unattainable. I believed then, as I believe now, that the object is both desirable and attainable. Whatever scruple, therefore, I may have felt in going along with former movements, it did not arise from any feeling as to the undesirableness of union, or from any sense of its being hopeless. But I now rejoice to be able to go heart and soul along with the movement that has been

originated, and so nobly originated, in the sister Church. I rejoice now that we are in a position to respond cordially and unanimously to their overtures; and I shall be heartily ready to lend all the help which I can to the removal of any obstacles that may stand in the way.

I shall not travel over the ground that has been already traversed by previous speakers, as regards the great principles that cannot be compromised, or as regards our historical position. I would just like, in the outset, to say one word in regard to both points.

As to the principles which we must hold to be inviolable, I trust that those who represent the Free Church of Scotland in any conferences upon the subject of union with our brethren of the sister Church will not be too anxious about explicit declarations, on the part either of the one side or of the other, as to the application, in this or that supposed case, of the great principles which we hold in common. I say this with reference both to our Church and to the United Presbyterian Church. I trust that we shall be satisfied with coming to a clear understanding upon the general principles which we hold in common, as regards the duty of the civil magistrate to regulate his conduct by the Word of God, and that we shall not be too careful to drive one another into settling how we would apply this great general principle on this or that suppositious occasion. Let us, I say, have confidence in one another's integrity, good faith, and good sense. And if we come to a clear understanding upon a scriptural principle, let us not be trying too minutely to test one another as to this or that particular application of it, but let us leave such questions to be settled as exigences may actually occur in the providence of God.

In regard to our historical position, I may be allowed to speak, as having been one of those chiefly concerned in vindicating our historical position in times past, and vindicating it very earnestly. But I think it right that it should be borne in mind that we have never sought to assert our historical position against our brethren who left the Establishment in former years. We have sought to assert our historical position as against the present Establishment—(hear, and applause)—and we shall continue to do so, to the effect of maintaining that our Disruption was not the secession of a portion of the Church from the remainder of the Church, but the separation of the Church, as such, from her alliance with the State. (Cheers.) We shall therefore contend, as we have contended, that we are the Church of Scotland. (Cheers.) Viewed in the light of history, as well as in the light of principle, we shall always continue to maintain that the present Establishment is but the creature of yesterday—(loud laughter and applause)—that the Established Church is not the old hereditary Church of Scotland, but that we are the old hereditary Church of Scotland, if our judgment on that point be formed on any sound scriptural or historical basis. (Applause.) But then, we shall certainly not ask our friends of the United Presbyterian Church to come forward and recognise us as “the first free reforming Assembly,” before which their protest, as taken at the time of the Secession, may be held still to lie. In dealing with them we shall not go back, in any controversial spirit, to former times. We have no intention, and we never had any intention, of asserting our historical position as against them. Even in the document in which we have asserted our historical position most strongly, we have asserted our oneness with those who left the Establishment before us, and who did so on the very same grounds substantially on which we were compelled to separate from the State.

A great deal has been said about difficulties in the way, and about what may be done to remove them by co-operation and good understanding in the meantime. Now, there is one point to which, as being closely connected with one of your colleges, I may be allowed to refer. The matter of theological education must of necessity soon come up in any negotiations of union that may go forward between us and the brethren of the sister Church. I know that they have been discussing the subject with great earnestness and consummate ability in their own Synod; raising the question as between their present plan of a summer session of two months and our plan of a winter session of five months. They have, I say, been discussing the subject of theological education, and we must of necessity, if we are to meet in conference with them, discuss the subject

along with them, because unquestionably any union that is to be effected between us must proceed upon some agreement or understanding as to the training of students. And here I venture to throw out a suggestion, which I think of some value, as being a practical one. I believe that this question might be solved with considerable ease, if we looked at it in the light of making common cause, to some extent, even in the meantime, in training our theological students. Moderator, if our brethren of the United Presbyterian Church saw their way to relieve their Professors of their pastoral charges, and set them apart to lecture and teach during the winter months, as our own Professors do, I venture to say that our three colleges would be at their service. I venture, moreover, to say that there would be no great difficulty in arranging that the tickets of the Professors might be mutually interchangeable. (Hear, hear.) I think we might, upon the platform of some concert and co-operation as to the training of our theological students, come to a practical understanding much sooner than perhaps in other departments that may have to come under discussion between us. I throw out this as a hint, merely incidentally. I believe that no Church ever possessed more valuable or trustworthy Professors of Theology than the United Presbyterian Church possesses at this moment. (Applause.) I believe there is not one of their Professors who might not be recognised by us as eminently qualified to teach the department entrusted to his care. And if we were to look at such men as are not Professors, yet who unquestionably ought to be Professors—such men as Dr Cairns of Berwick—(applause)—we might well consider whether it might not be practicable to come to some understanding as to some of them joining us in those large premises here, in Glasgow, and in Aberdeen, on the footing of something like a reciprocity in recognising one another's classes. (Applause.) I would rejoice to see some step of this sort at least fairly considered in any conference between our committee and the committee of the United Presbyterian Synod; and I would anticipate that this might possibly form one of the very best ways of coming practically to one upon other important points that must come up for adjustment, if union is ever to be effected.

But I pass from this, and I would just like, before the discussion comes to a close, to express, or at least try to express, the sense I have of the peculiar solemnity of the position which we now occupy. I have no hesitation in saying, as some have said before me, that I look upon this day's proceedings, in connexion with the proceedings of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, as by far the most important ecclesiastical event that has happened in Scotland since the Disruption—perhaps even more important than the Disruption itself. (Applause.) I should like, therefore, that our brethren and friends here, and throughout the country, should very deeply ponder, as in the sight of God, the singular solemnity and responsibility of the position which we now occupy. I do not speak for our brethren of the sister Church. They, no doubt, have the very same feelings that I have, and that I would wish all the brethren to have; but I speak for myself, and for all here present, and for all throughout the borders of our Church.

One thing, in my judgment, is perfectly clear—it is that a step has now been taken by both of the Churches, from which there is no going back. What I mean is this—a step has now been taken which is irrevocable in this sense, that we never can recover the position which we have occupied separately from one another, exactly as it was before. We may go forward in our attempt to consummate a union; and we may fail. The attempt may not succeed. Will anybody say that, after this night's proceedings, viewed in connexion with the proceedings of the sister Church, it will ever be possible for these two bodies to resume again exactly the same position with reference to one another, or within themselves, that they occupied before these negotiations began? (Hear, hear.) Sir, it is impossible in the nature of things. If we are compelled to go out of this attempt at union, acknowledging it to be a failure, we must of necessity come out of it, standing in very different relations to one another from those in which we stood before the attempt was made. Nay, sir, we must come out of it, I am persuaded, with elements of evil among ourselves that cannot be over-estimated. I feel therefore, sir, that this is one of those steps which, having been once

taken, pledges us, unless God in His providence manifestly interposes, to go through with it—to go forward. (Applause.) “Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.” Surely that is God’s word now, as in the days of Moses. Though the sea be before, and Pharaoh’s host behind—“Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward.” (Loud applause.) Let the consideration which I have now indicated be duly weighed. Two parties negotiate for a union between themselves. If the negotiation fails, they must of necessity suffer in their relations to one another, and also in their own personal character, in their own personal attainments. And so it will be with the two Churches, if by any possibility this step now taken should need to be retraced. While I say that, however, I wish it to be clearly understood that I say it simply to impress my own mind, and the minds of all the brethren, and of all the members of the Church, with a sense of the responsibility involved in what is now done. But I say it not in the slightest degree in any spirit of hopelessness, far less in any spirit of unbelief.

Sir, it is impossible to predict the future. But I cannot allow myself to fear, I cannot allow myself to think, that the great and holy ideal that is now presenting itself before our eyes, is an ideal that is to vanish, to vanish like the mist, to vanish like the early cloud. We may be under a temptation to magnify, in a temporal point of view, the advantages of this union. We may be under a temptation to dwell upon the moral power and influence which this union would give to the Established Church of Scotland,—the Free United Church of Scotland,—not only in this country, but over the world. (Applause.) But I look forward to the future, not merely as holding out very bright prospects of increased power and increased influence, but rather as involving very grave responsibilities, in connexion with vastly increased ability to promote the glory of God in the salvation of souls. And I would desire all friends of this movement, in anticipating the future, to anticipate it in that spirit. For, if it should please the Lord to make us who have been two separate Churches in the land henceforth one, to bring us all together,—I hope not a solitary brother on either side left behind,—if it should please Him thus to weld us into one, can we doubt that it will be for some great work connected with the glory of His name?

Sir, if I could venture to hope that within a few years this blessed consummation might be reached—if a Free United Church of Scotland, thoroughly Calvinistic, thoroughly Presbyterian, non-established as to the State, but established in the hearts of the people, were to be set up in the land, prosecuting zealously the ends which each of the two Churches is now prosecuting, as regards both home and foreign missions;—I say, I cannot doubt that a mighty influence for real good, in the highest sense, would be exerted, not only upon the whole community generally, but, I will add, without offence, on the Established Church itself. If we could present to Scotland, and to the Established Church, the spectacle of a great body, united upon scriptural principles for prosecuting the work of God, not distracted about matters of form and ceremony,—not led away by the temptation of an alliance with High Church or Broad Church over the Border,—but prosecuting steadily the Lord’s work, according to the good old notion of the Calvinistic Presbyterian Church of Scotland—(applause)—sir, if we could do this, our brethren of the Establishment would become ashamed of these gew-gaw novelties they seem to be desiring—(loud applause)—and I am persuaded also, that in that Establishment, if such a spectacle were exhibited, their professors of divinity, instead of cultivating the intimacy, on theological ground, of the Maurices and the Stanleys, and others of like tendencies across the Border, would be right glad to come back again to the old Scotch theology. (Much applause.) This seems to me a bright anticipation. Let us, by the blessing of God, exhibit in this country a united Church, such as we hope to see formed,—a Church prosecuting simply the good work of the Lord, undisturbed either by divers winds of doctrine or by divers winds—what shall I say?—by divers winds of the organ? (Great laughter.) Let us once be in a position to present such a Church in Scotland—then most firmly I believe that we should see a speedy end put to influences which I must say at this moment fill my mind with the deepest alarm. For I cannot look at the Established Universities, and some of the men who there are presiding over

the theological training of students—(hear, hear)—but with the very deepest alarm. (Hear, hear.) For if unsound views or latitudinarian principles begin in the Established halls of the country, they will not end there; they will soon pervade all other bodies. And I believe that nothing will check the progress of such evils as these so effectually as this very union which we are now proposing. It would make us heart and hand united, shoulder to shoulder, in maintaining the old truth, and standing on our guard against all novelties. (Applause.)

I have just one or two things more to advert to; and they shall be of a practical sort. I do hope it will be borne in mind,—and in this I would take the liberty of speaking not merely to the members of this Assembly, but to the community outside,—that this negotiation of union is a matter of very great delicacy, requiring to be very tenderly handled. If some of our elders and lay friends have thought that we in the ministry have been somewhat laggard—if they have been apt to be going forward themselves more hastily than, perhaps, they could get all of us to agree to;—I think they might give us credit for this—that we professionally see somewhat more of the delicacies connected with these negotiations than they can be expected to do. I believe that we who are in the ministry will be all the better for being urged forward by the zeal and energy of our lay friends, to whom, in this matter, we owe a deep debt of gratitude. But still I would say that they need not be surprised if we, whose profession it has been to study these subjects, do see more of the difficulties than may at first sight strike their view. (Hear.) All I point to is this, that I trust,—now that the matter has taken earnest practical shape,—now that committees have been appointed by the Supreme Courts of the respective Churches to meet and confer,—all interested in this cause, all over the country, and throughout the Church, will repose full confidence in the good faith of these committees, for the present at least. I trust our friends will believe that we will prosecute the work committed to us with all possible earnestness. And I trust they will make some allowance for us, and understand that we, as theologians,—with our prejudice, bigotry, fanaticism, or whatever you may call it;—will require some little time, perhaps, to discuss points of delicacy, the full relevancy of which they may not be able to comprehend. Perhaps we may be found standing on points, so as sometimes to be standing on nothing. (A laugh.) Nevertheless, I think it would be a desirable thing if our friends were to trust our good faith in carrying forward these negotiations, and not attempt to hurry us too fast; having a little patience, and believing we are discussing these points with the truest and most earnest view of ultimately coming to a good understanding regarding them all.

I have a word or two to say in regard to the question of time. And here what I have to say will be in the opposite direction to some things that have been already said on the subject. I am very thoroughly impressed with the conviction of the need of caution. Nothing will be gained by haste. And, above all, nothing will be gained by any attempt of the nature of patchwork. Everything must be done deliberately, plainly, and openly between the two committees. I am quite prepared, therefore, for a little delay. But there are one or two considerations which seem to me important.

In the nature of things, I do not think this is a case requiring great delay. And for this plain reason,—that it is not one in which we go into a negotiation where unforeseen difficulties may be expected to arise. Almost all the difficulties are patent and palpable already; they lie on the surface; we have talked of them openly. I could conceive a negotiation in which difficulties might be started, and new questions raised, in the course of the conferences that might be carried on, so that the negotiation might be indefinitely protracted. That need not be the case here. We know exactly the points of difficulty before any conference. And therefore I think this negotiation need not be protracted. We can tell perfectly well what are the points on which we wish to have a common understanding—we know all this before we meet. And then I cannot help thinking that this is a case in which the proverb may apply, “Delays are dangerous;” and, “What is done well is all the better done if it be done quickly.” (Applause.) “There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” We all know, if the tide

be allowed to turn, the difficulty increases. Now, there is a tide at this moment in the direction of union. Men's hearts are warmed; men's feelings are interested. I do not say that the union should be determined by mere feeling,—that it should be a matter of impulse. But impulse is often beneficial even for stimulating the understanding. The impulse of the heart, the impulse of moral feeling, especially if it be the impulse of Christian charity and brotherly love, is a benefit in discussing every question that can affect the kingdom of the great God of grace and peace. We ought not to contemplate, therefore, the protracting of these negotiations, lest the warm feelings of brotherhood should begin to subside, and then we should fall into hair-splitting and word-catching, and become ensnared in syllables, instead of broadly unfurling the banner of God's truth. (Applause.)

I have a stronger feeling still in reference to this whole matter. I should not be so inclined to take part in it, as I do with all my heart, if I did not believe, and were not thoroughly convinced in my own mind, that it is of the Lord—that the Spirit of God has been moving in the hearts both of our people and of the people of the sister Church. I cannot doubt that the proceedings in the United Presbyterian Synod and in this Assembly are the result of the presence of God's Holy Spirit, now with us, and then with them—of the Spirit's working in the hearts of the members of both Churches. Now, I cannot forget the solemn warnings of the Divine Word, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;" "Vex not the Spirit." Let us beware of undue procrastination, of needlessly prolonged hesitancy. The Spirit is with us, I humbly trust, now. Let us see that we do not weary, vex, or grieve the Holy Spirit by needless delays, questions, and disagreements.

Let us always steadily contemplate the vast magnitude of the movement. Let us not forget that, as regards Scotland, its magnitude is unprecedented since the Reformation. It is a proposal to rebuild the walls of our national Zion. It is a proposal to rear again our Jerusalem—again to nationalise the Church of Scotland. (Applause.) In the view of its magnitude and its vast importance, I cannot avoid referring, as I close, to two texts of Scripture which have been much in my mind and upon my heart during these few days past. The first is what is said of aged Eli, that "his heart trembled for the ark of God." Surely, if ever it could be said of any men that they were touching the ark of God in a very delicate manner, it may be said of us, and of our brethren of the sister Church. And oh! I desire that all of us should go forward to this work in the spirit of aged Eli, our hearts trembling for the ark of God. The other text is this promise of our blessed Lord:—"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father." That text affords a warrant for believing that, when God's Holy Spirit moves two or three, or any number, of His people to concur in praying for one particular thing, according to His holy Word, that thing will be done. Now, I cannot doubt that we have evidence of its being put into the hearts, not of one or two, but of a large multitude of his praying people in both Churches to agree, as touching this one thing, that they should ask that the two Churches, so thoroughly one in principle, in profession, in work, should be thoroughly one outwardly as they are thoroughly one at heart. I think that that prayer is one which we may well lay hold of, and one upon which we may build with confident expectation.

I hope the issue of this day's deliberation will be as satisfactory to our sister Church as the issue of their deliberations has been to us. (Applause.) I must say, on reading the proceedings of the United Presbyterian Synod, not only on the question of union, but on other vital questions that came before them, I was inclined to say that I could not remember to have read the proceedings of any Church court with more admiration of the ability, the temper, and the Christian spirit, displayed in the discussions, than I felt in reading the reports of the proceedings of the United Presbyterian Synod. (Renewed applause.) I trust we have met their overture in the same spirit in which they made it; and I humbly hope that the blessing of God may rest on all the conferences held in His name and under His auspices. (Loud applause.)

Professor GIBSON apologised for an unintentional discourtesy to the much-re-

spected, highly-talented, scientific scholar who seconded his motion, in not asking his permission to withdraw it.

Dr FORBES, though still holding to the principles he had advocated in the forenoon, consented to the withdrawal of the motion; and he hoped the committee would realise all that had been expected of it.

Rev. C. J. BROWN suggested that the members of both Churches would make it a matter of conscience to bear these committees on their hearts before the Lord in prayer.

The motion of Dr Buchanan was then unanimously adopted; and Dr Henderson of Glasgow engaged in prayer.

Dr BUCHANAN then rose and said, that it had been suggested by Sir H. Moncreiff that the nomination of the committee to be appointed in terms of his motion should not take place at present, but to-morrow; and he thought Sir Henry's suggestion would commend itself to the Assembly. (Applause.) I can only say (continued Dr Buchanan) that as the motion which I had the honour to propose, and which, to my unspeakable happiness, has been so unanimously adopted,—a motion framed and brought forward in a spirit the farthest possible removed from controversy,—so it would be in the same spirit that I would desire to act in the nomination of the committee; for I feel that if this matter be not prosecuted as it has been begun—that is, in a spirit, and in a way and manner, that will carry the confidence not merely of some, or even of a considerable portion of this House and the Church, but which will carry the confidence of the Church at large,—in vain shall we proceed in it at all. (Applause.)

The Assembly then adjourned.

COMMITTEE ON UNION.

Ministers.

The Moderator, Mr M'LEOD of Snizort.
 Dr CLASON, Edinburgh.
 Dr CANDLISH, „
 Dr GUTHRIE, „
 Dr R. BUCHANAN, Glasgow.
 Principal FAIRBAIRN, „
 Dr BEGG, Edinburgh.
 Dr FORBES, Glasgow.
 Dr GIBSON, „
 Mr C. J. BROWN, Edinburgh.
 Professor BANNERMAN, „
 Mr WM. WILSON, Dundee.
 Mr THOMAS MAIN, Edinburgh.
 Mr NIXON, Montrose.
 Professor LUMSDEN, Aberdeen.
 Dr M'INTOSH M'KAY, Harris.
 Mr CHARLES THOMSON, Wick.
 Sir HENRY MONCREIFF, Edinburgh.
 Professor RAINY, „
 Dr J. JULIUS WOOD, Dumfries.
 Mr WILLIAM LAUGHTON, Greenock.
 Dr BEITH, Stirling.
 Dr R. J. BROWN, Aberdeen.
 Mr THOMAS M'LAUCHLAN, Edinburgh.
 Dr ROXBURGH, Glasgow.

Elders.

The Earl of DALHOUSIE.
 Mr A. M. DUNLOP, M.P.
 Mr N. E. CAMPBELL, Advocate.
 The Earl of KINTORE.
 Sheriff JAMESON, Edinburgh.
 Captain SHEPHERD, Skene, Aberdeen-shire.
 Professor MILLER, Edinburgh.
 Mr F. BROWN DOUGLAS, Edinburgh.
 Mr GEORGE DALZIEL, „
 Mr HENRY DUNLOP, Glasgow.
 Mr JOHN BLACKIE, „
 Mr GEORGE MELDRUM, Edinburgh.
 Mr W. CAMPBELL, Tillichowan.
 Colonel DAVIDSON, Edinburgh.
 Mr ROBERT PAUL, „
 Mr WILLIAM S. TURNBULL, Huntingtower, Perth.
 Mr ANDERSON KIRKWOOD, Glasgow.
 Mr JAMES OGILVIE DALGLEISH, of Woodburn, Fife.

Convener.

Dr R. BUCHANAN.

Guarded

They ~~are~~ we are
like as they are







